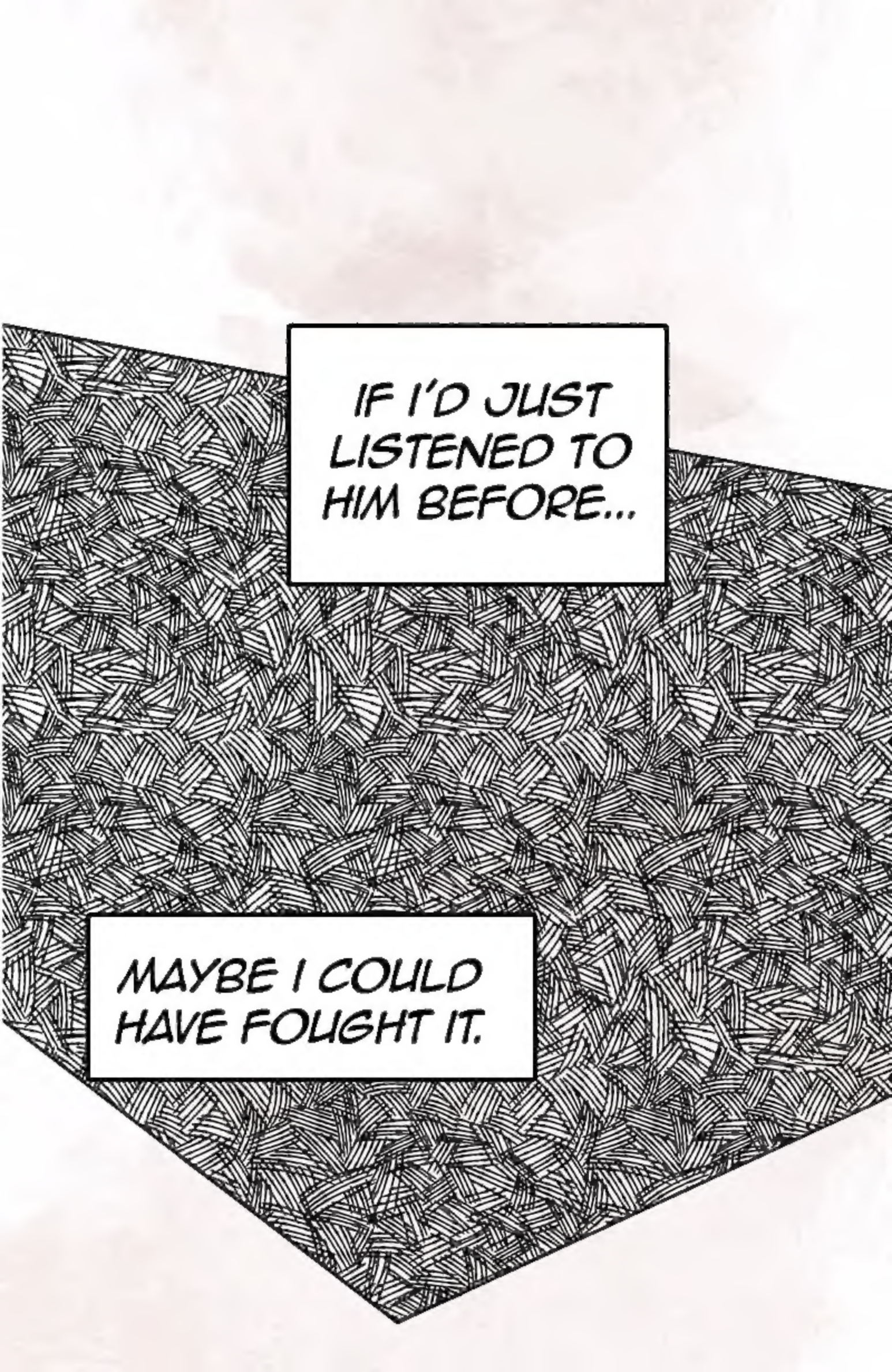
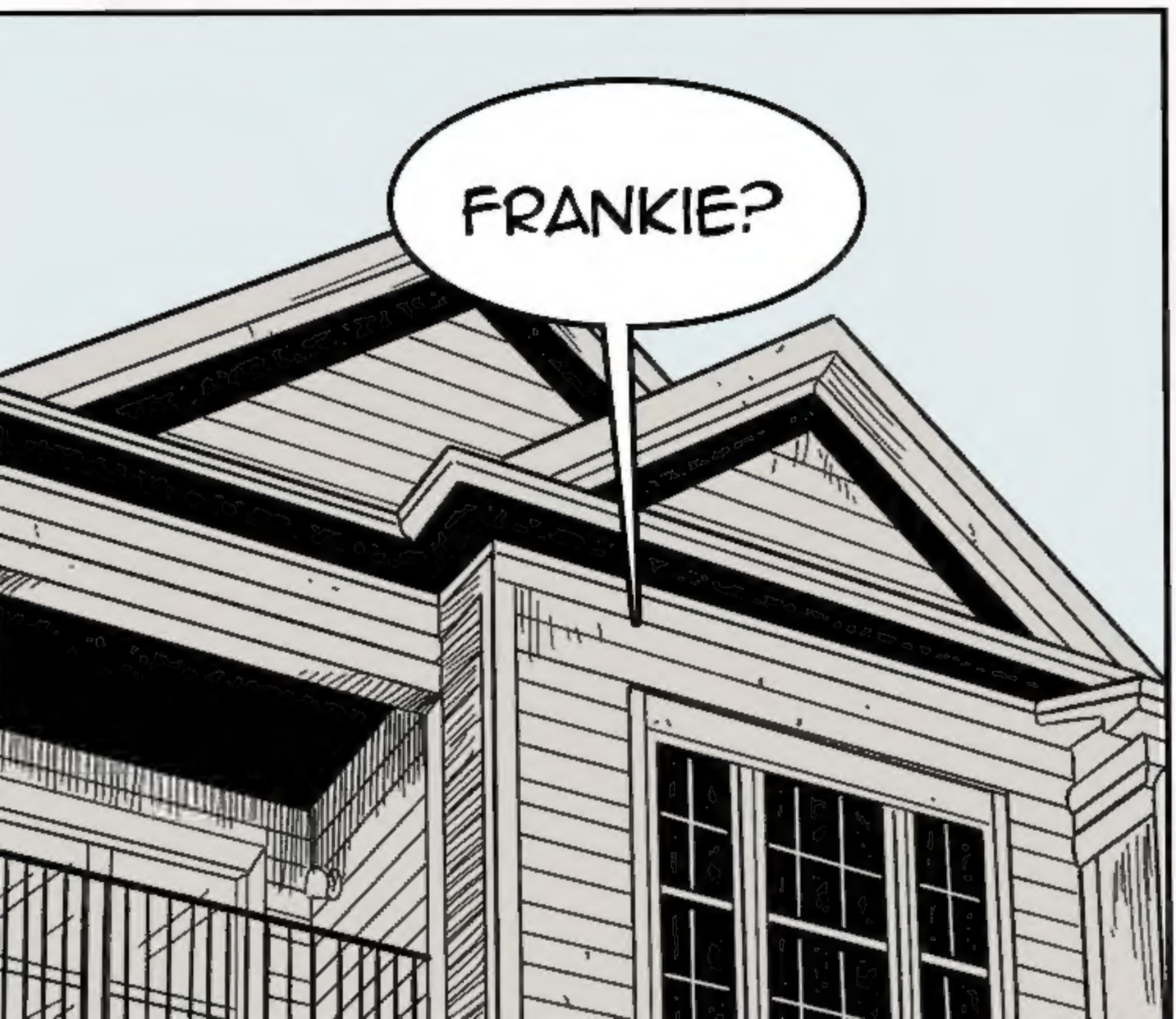
KLAK
KLAK

I CAN'T BELIEVE...

I JUST...FAILED JEREMY LIKE THAT.

I COULD HAVE DONE SOMETHING.


IF I'D JUST LISTENED TO HIM BEFORE...
MAYBE I COULD HAVE FOUGHT IT.

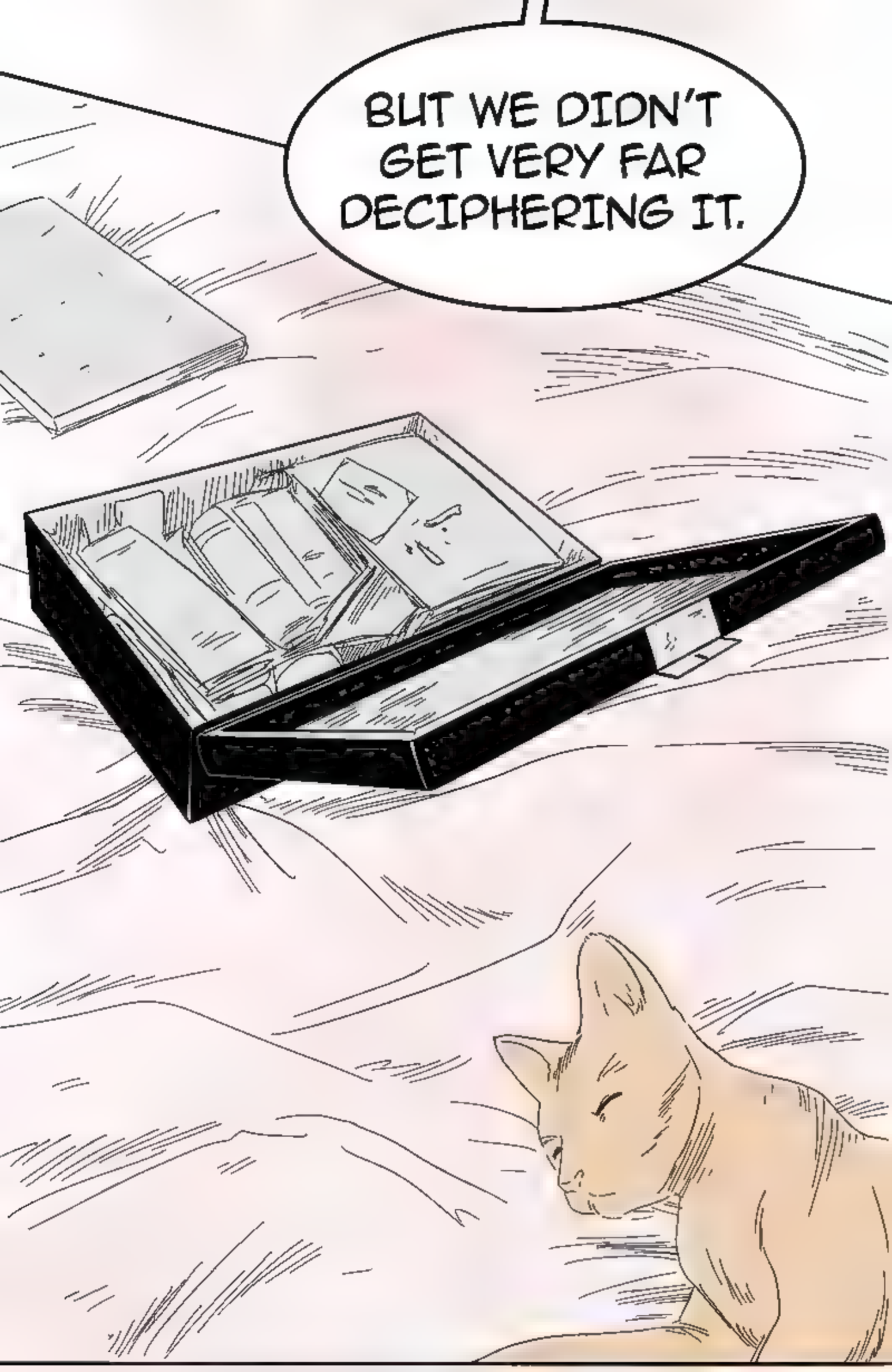

FRANKIE?

J'S AWAKE. HE WANTS TO GO OVER SOME STUFF...

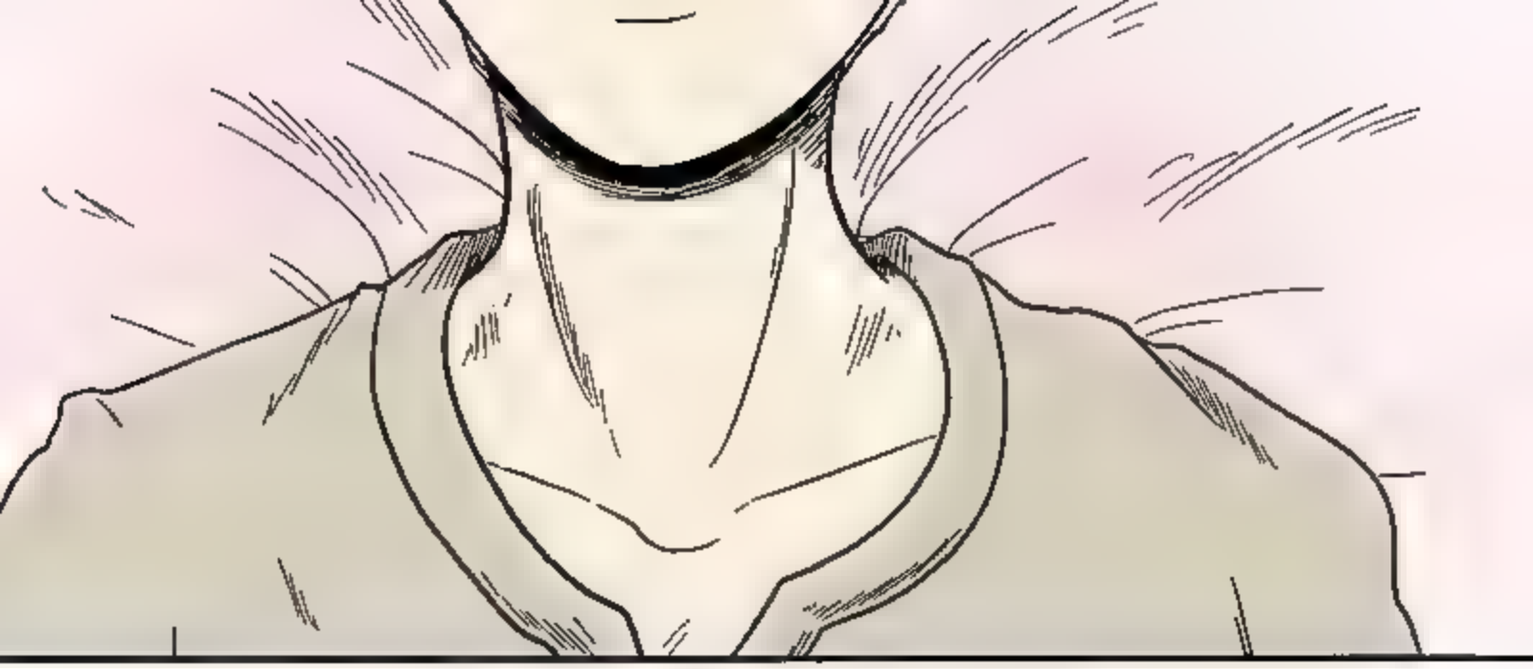
LONG HAUL

part four

I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU GUYS GOT ALL THIS...
WELL, HA, HAD TO DO A LITTLE BREAKING IN TO GET IT.


BUT WE DIDN'T GET VERY FAR DECIPHERING IT.

WELL, COULDN'T BE TOO CAREFUL. I HAD TO ENCODE A LOT OF IT.
A LOT OF THIS IS NOTES ABOUT NOVA.



DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'VE FOUND OUT ABOUT THEM...

NOVA WAS A

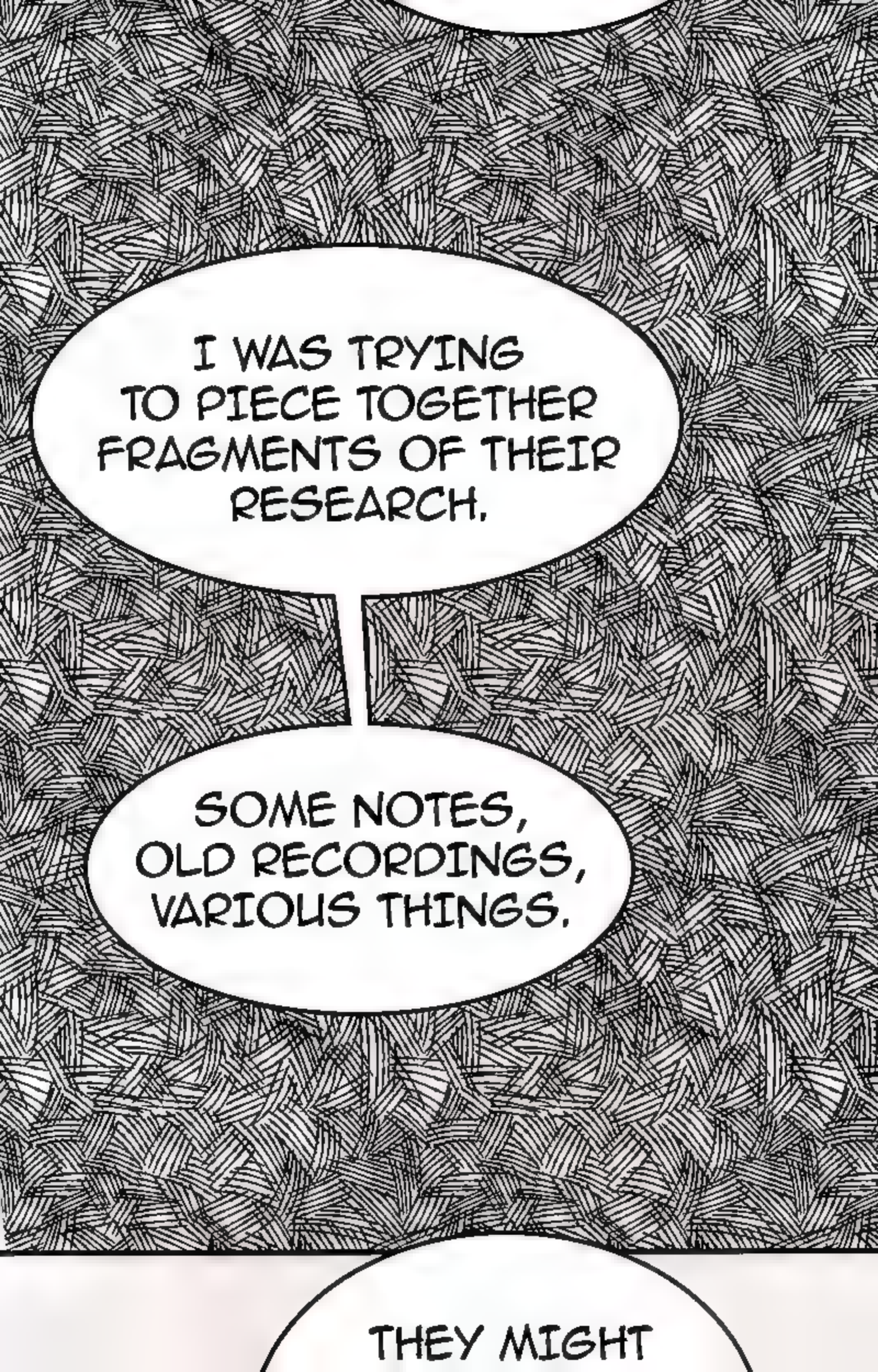
RESIDENT OF THE TOWN BACK IN THE 70'S AND INTO THE 2000'S.

I DON'T KNOW THEIR REAL NAME, I JUST NICKNAMED THEM AFTER A BOX OF STUFF I FOUND IN THE LIBRARY.

IT HAD A LABEL THAT SAID "NOVA" ON IT, AND INSIDE WERE NOTES ABOUT THE...

...THE ENTITY THING. AND THAT SYMBOL OF PROTECTION.

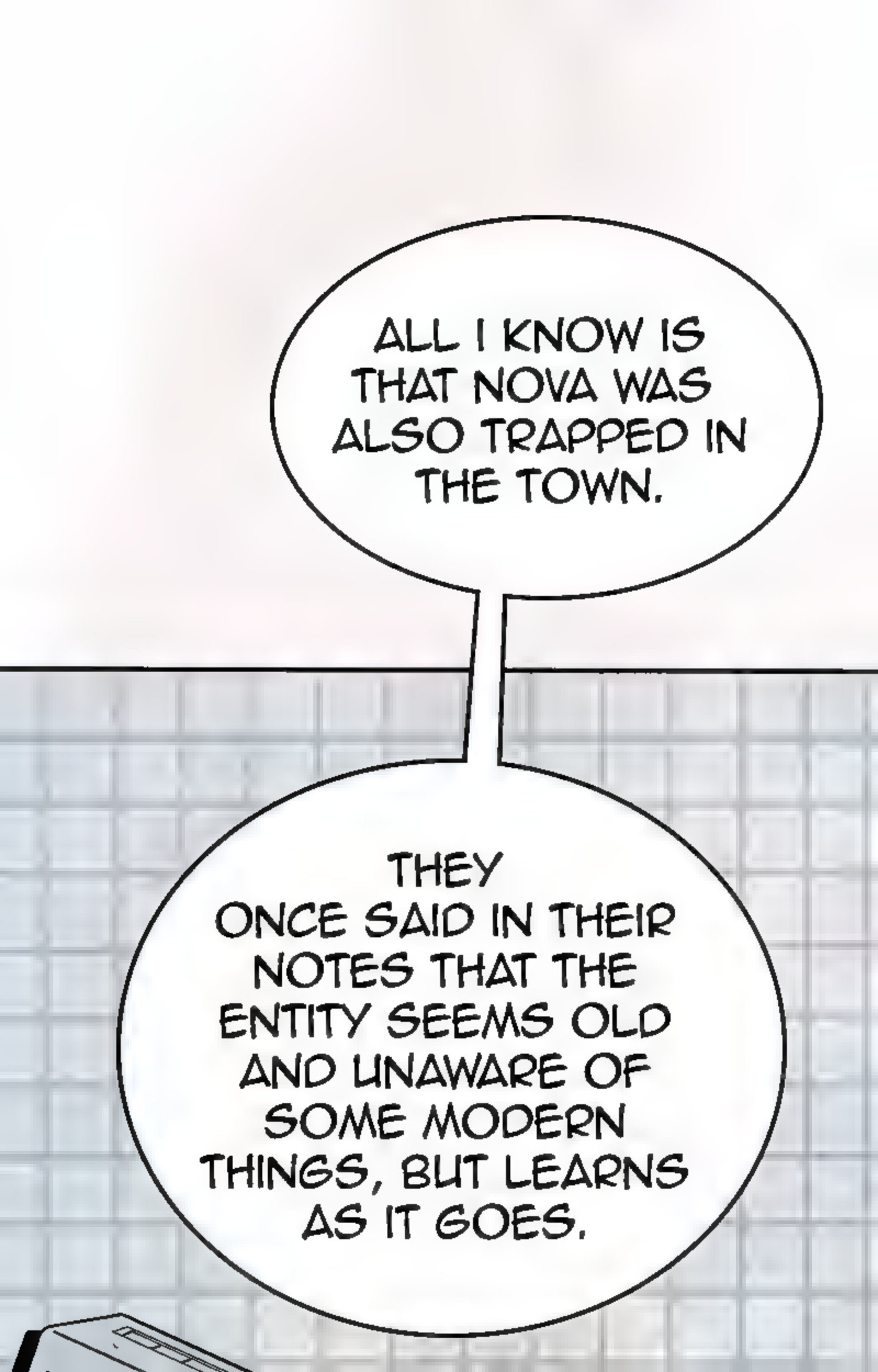
I THINK THEY CREATED THE SYMBOL.

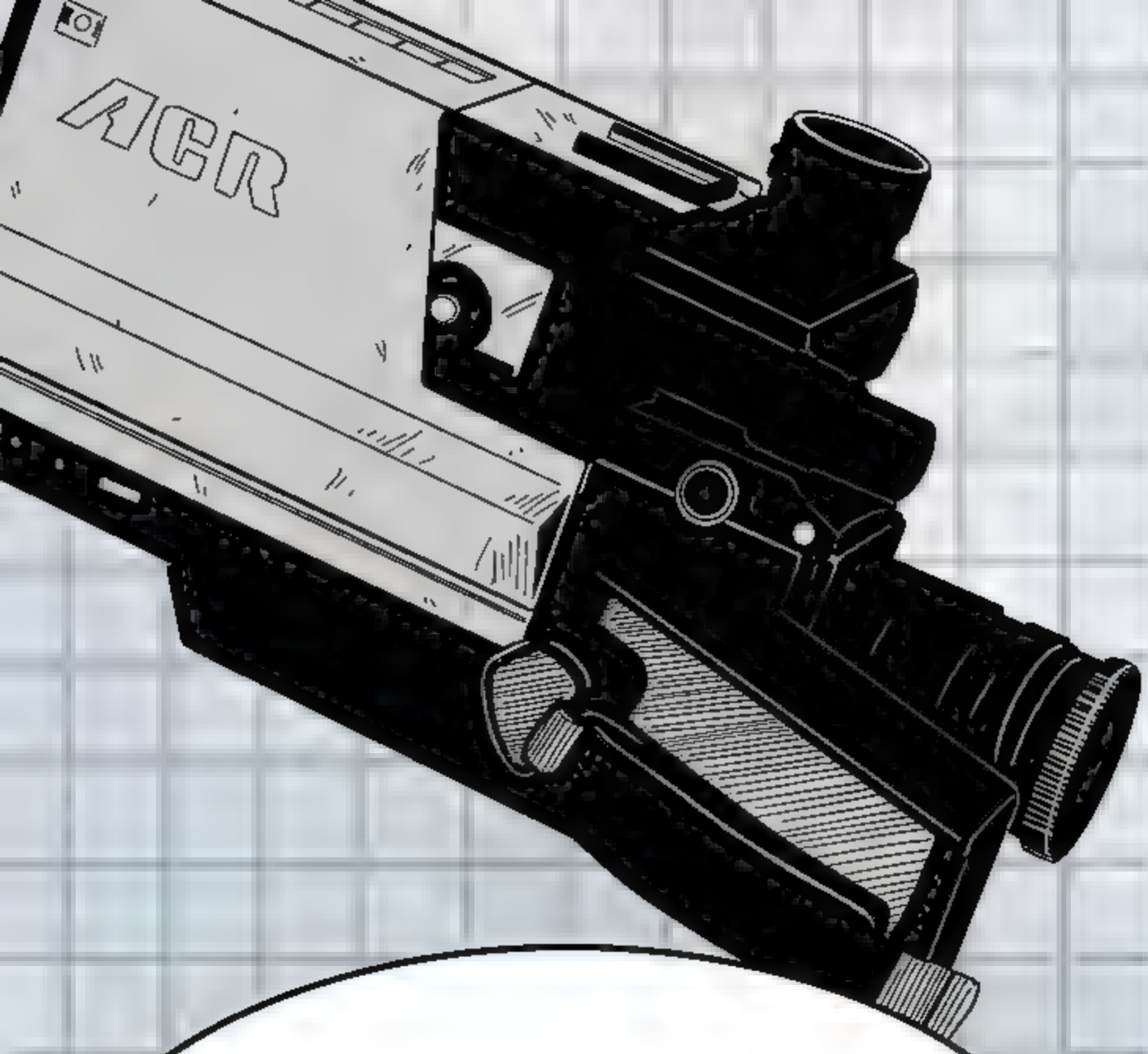

I WAS TRYING TO PIECE TOGETHER FRAGMENTS OF THEIR RESEARCH.
SOME NOTES, OLD RECORDINGS, VARIOUS THINGS.
THEY MIGHT

BE THE ONLY PERSON WE CAN LEARN MORE FROM.

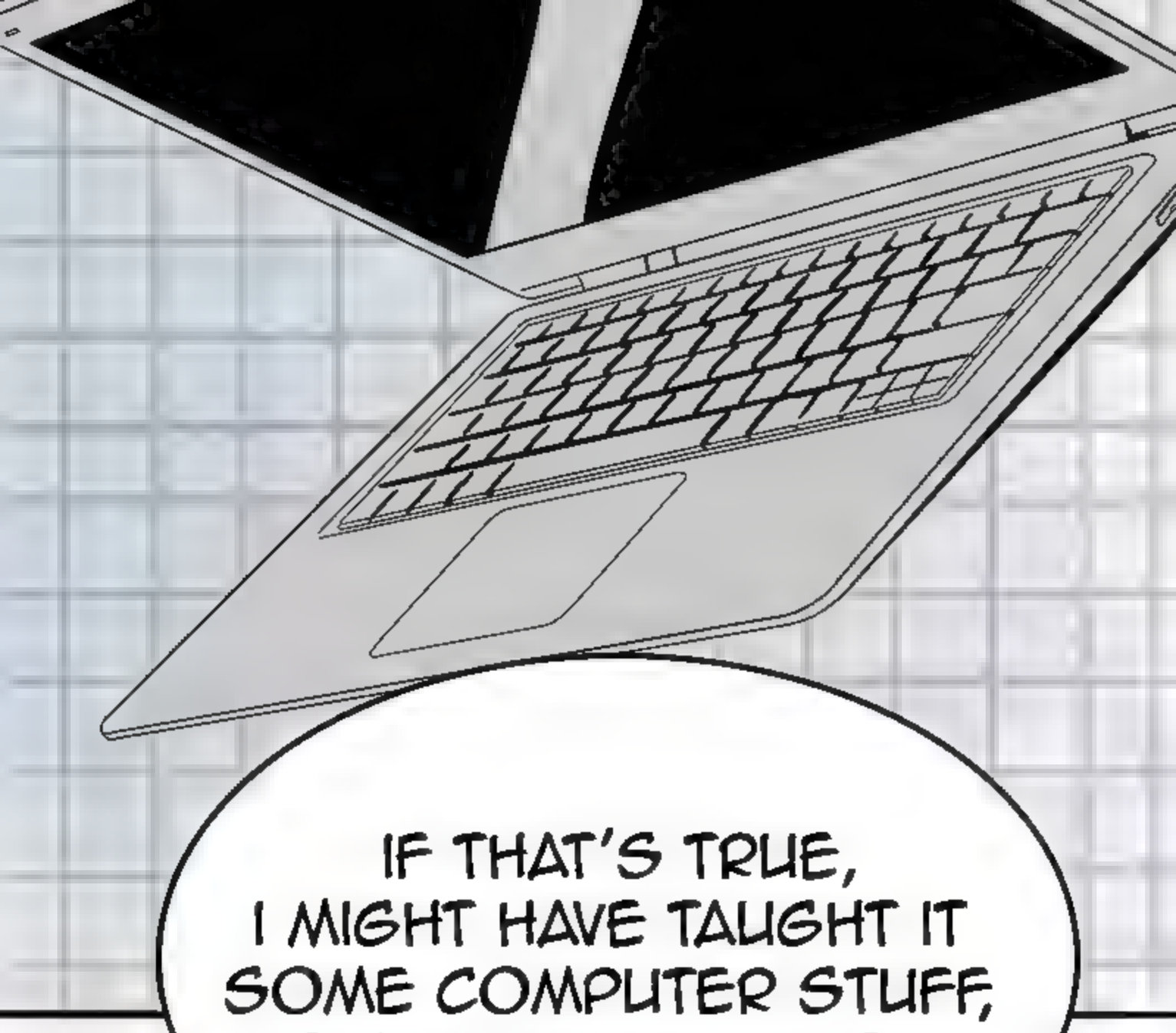
YOU THINK THEY MIGHT STILL BE ALIVE?

NOT SURE.


ALL I KNOW IS THAT NOVA WAS ALSO TRAPPED IN THE TOWN.
THEY ONCE SAID IN THEIR NOTES THAT THE ENTITY SEEMS OLD AND UNAWARE OF SOME MODERN THINGS, BUT LEARNS AS IT GOES.



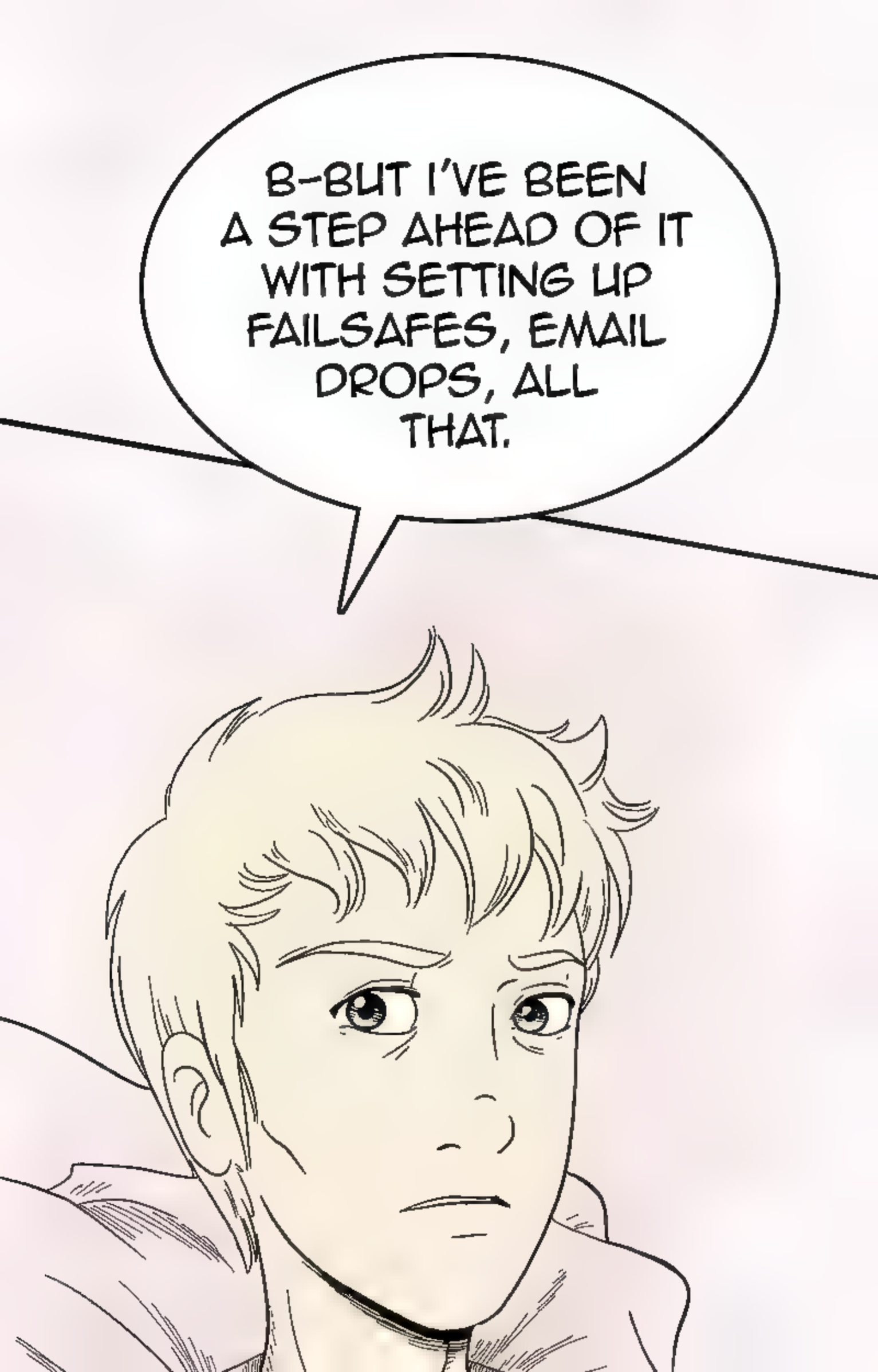
I *THINK* NOVA ACCIDENTALLY TAUGHT IT CAMERAS, BY FILMING CONSTANTLY AROUND TOWN.



IF THAT'S TRUE, I MIGHT HAVE TAUGHT IT SOME COMPUTER STUFF, SINCE I KEPT A BLOG.

SO...

...WHOOPS.

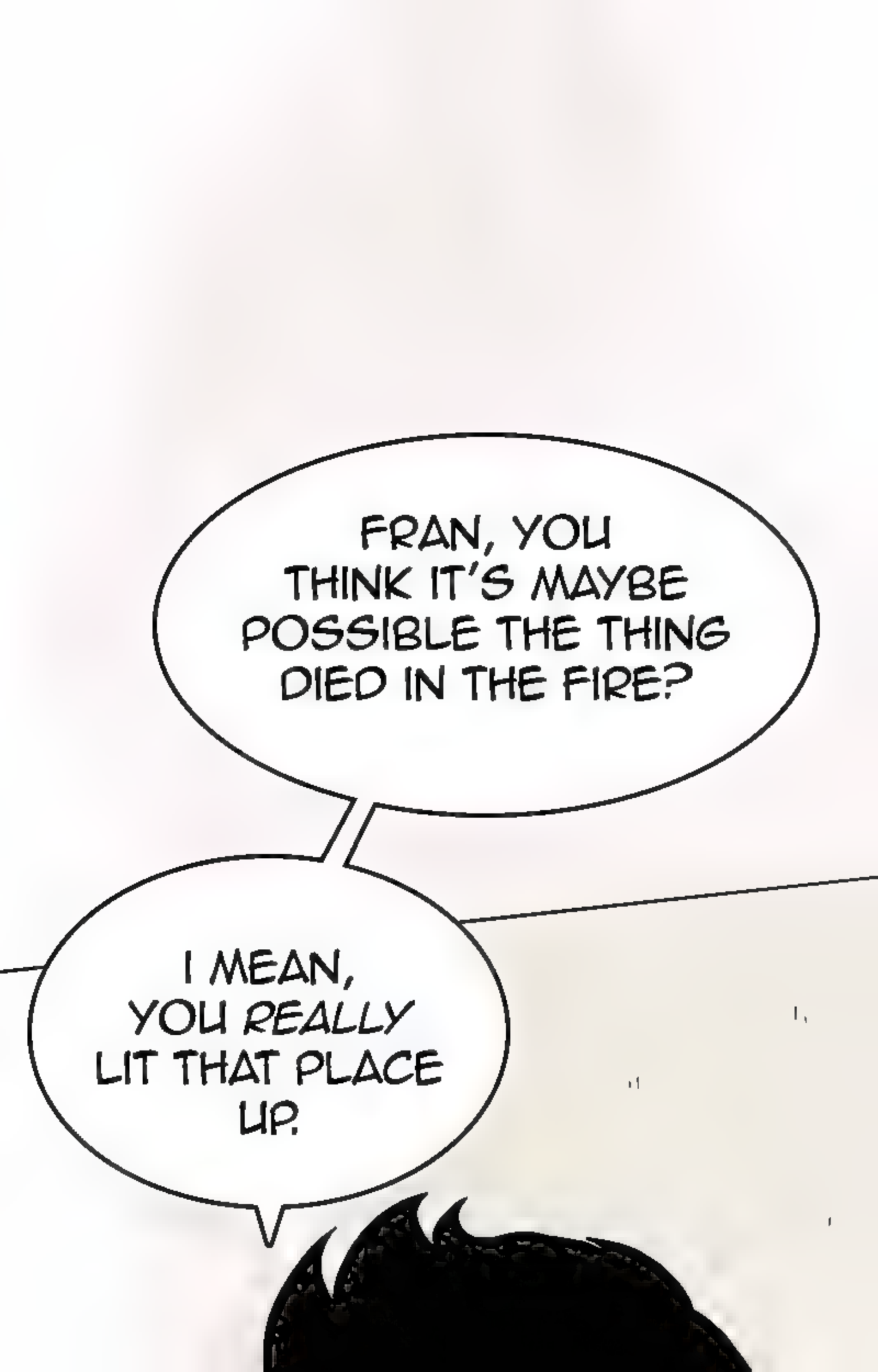

B-BUT I'VE BEEN A STEP AHEAD OF IT WITH SETTING UP FAILSAFES, EMAIL DROPS, ALL THAT.

IT SEEMS TO LEARN WORDS FAST, BUT NUMBERS SLOW IT DOWN A BIT.

SO I USED A LOT OF NUMERICAL CODES FOR MY NOTES.

DO YOU THINK IT'S BECOME TOO INTELLIGENT TO BE OUTSMARTED?

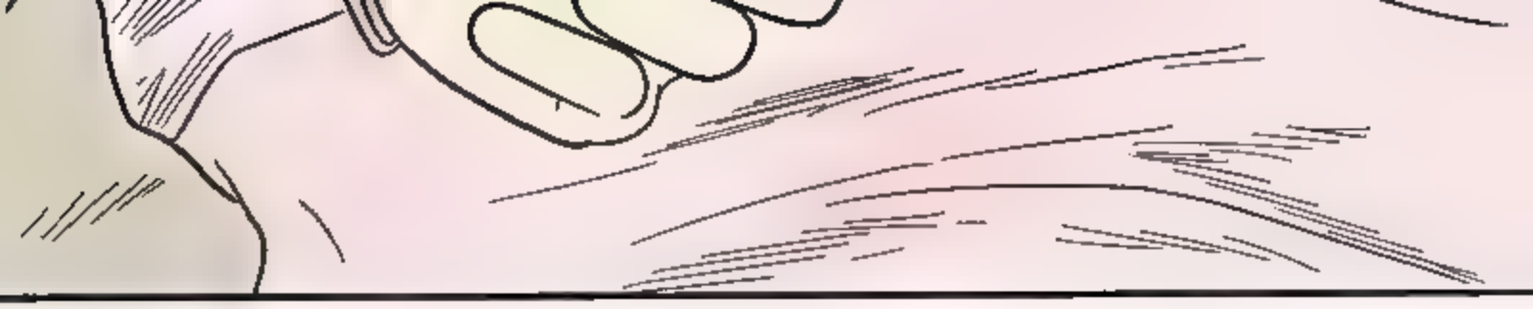
N-NOT YET...
I DON'T THINK.


FRAN, YOU THINK IT'S MAYBE POSSIBLE THE THING DIED IN THE FIRE?
I MEAN, YOU *REALLY* LIT THAT PLACE UP.

NO, I DOUBT IT. SEEMS LIKE IT PERMEATES

THE WHOLE TOWN.

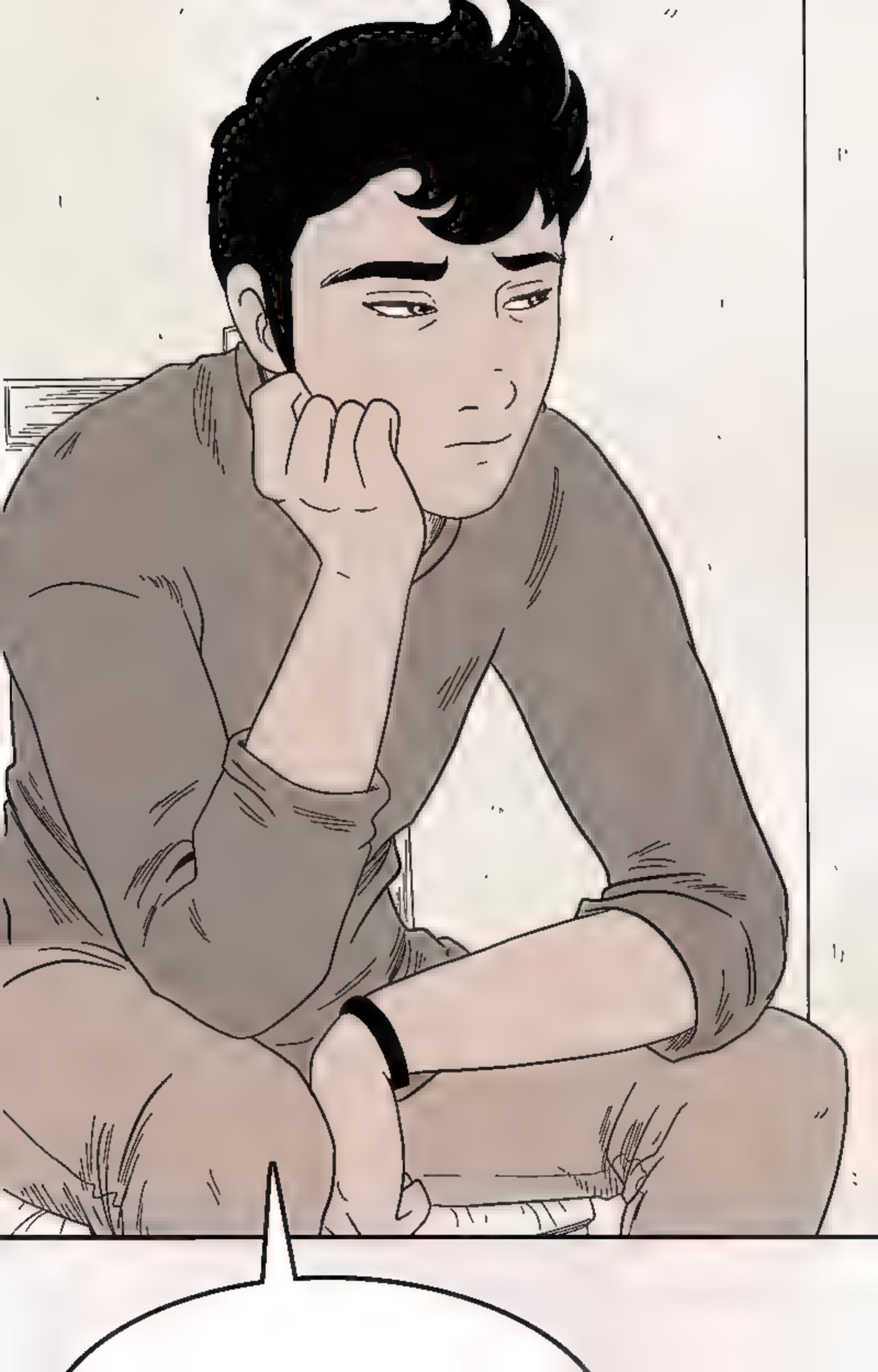
IT MIGHT BE HURT, BUT IT'LL COME BACK.



HMMM...

GUESS WE'LL HAVE TO FORTIFY THE PLACE AND JUST...WAIT.

BE READY WHEN IT DOES COME.

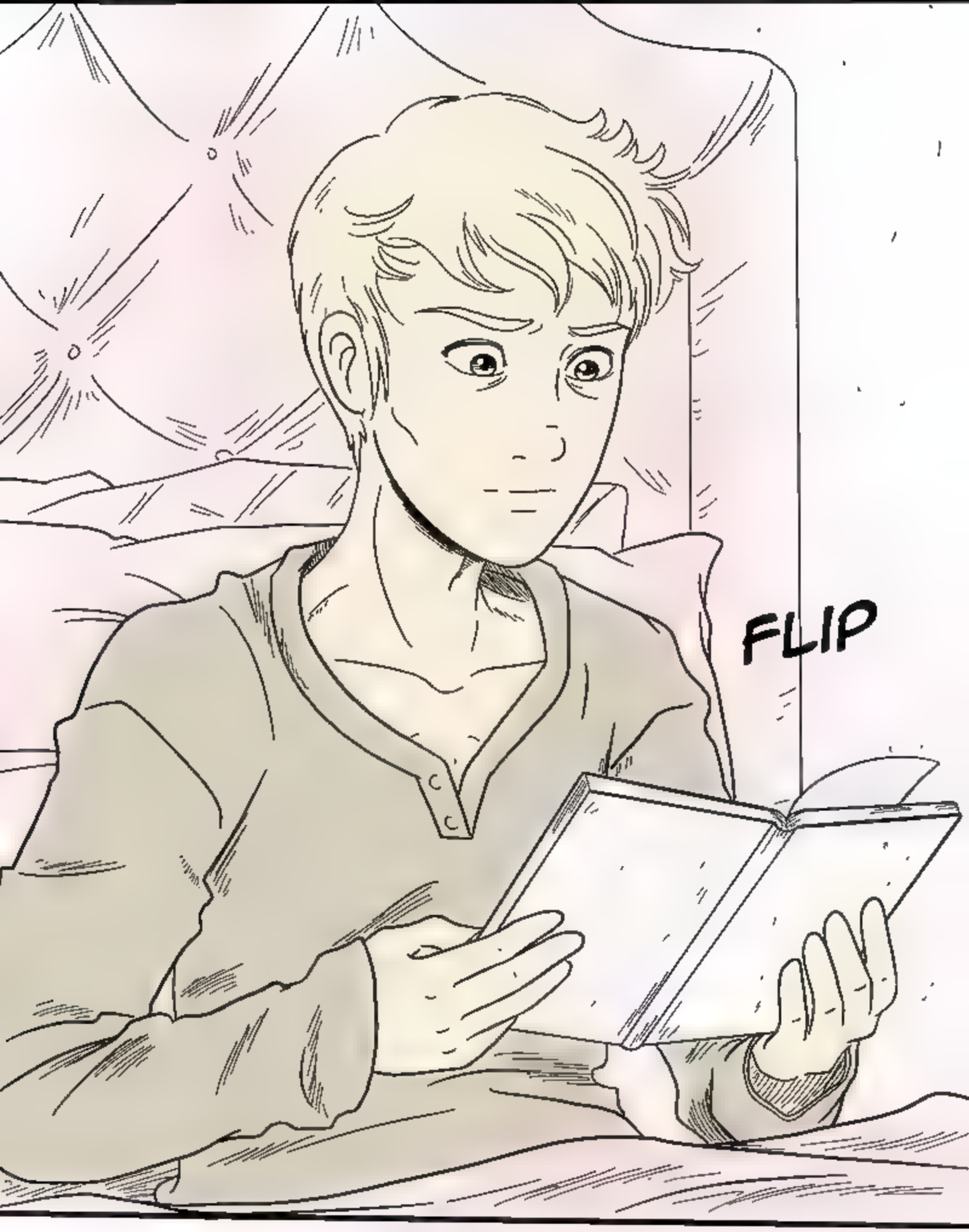


HEY, MAYBE WE CAN BUY A FLAMETHROWER...

WHAT? FELIX, THOSE ARE *ILLEGAL.*

AND WE COULDN'T AFFORD ONE EVEN IF THEY WERE SOLD ON EVERY CORNER.

I BARELY HAD ENOUGH TO BUY *BREAD* THE OTHER DAY.

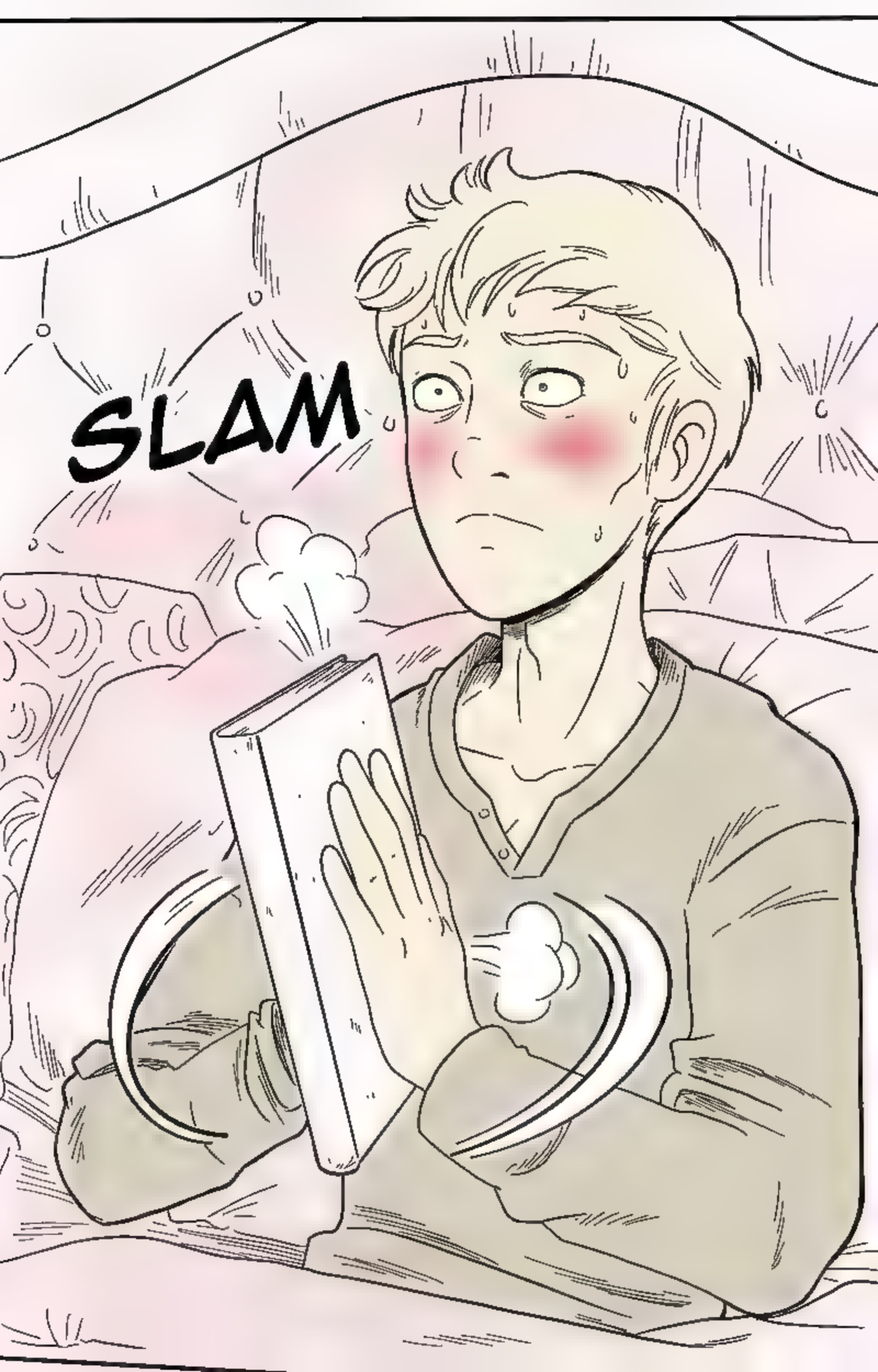


WELL, THEN WE CAN MAKE ONE.

OUT OF WHAT? BOTTLE ROCKETS AND HAIRSPRAY?

HEY, DON'T USE MY HAIR SPRAY. I NEED THAT.

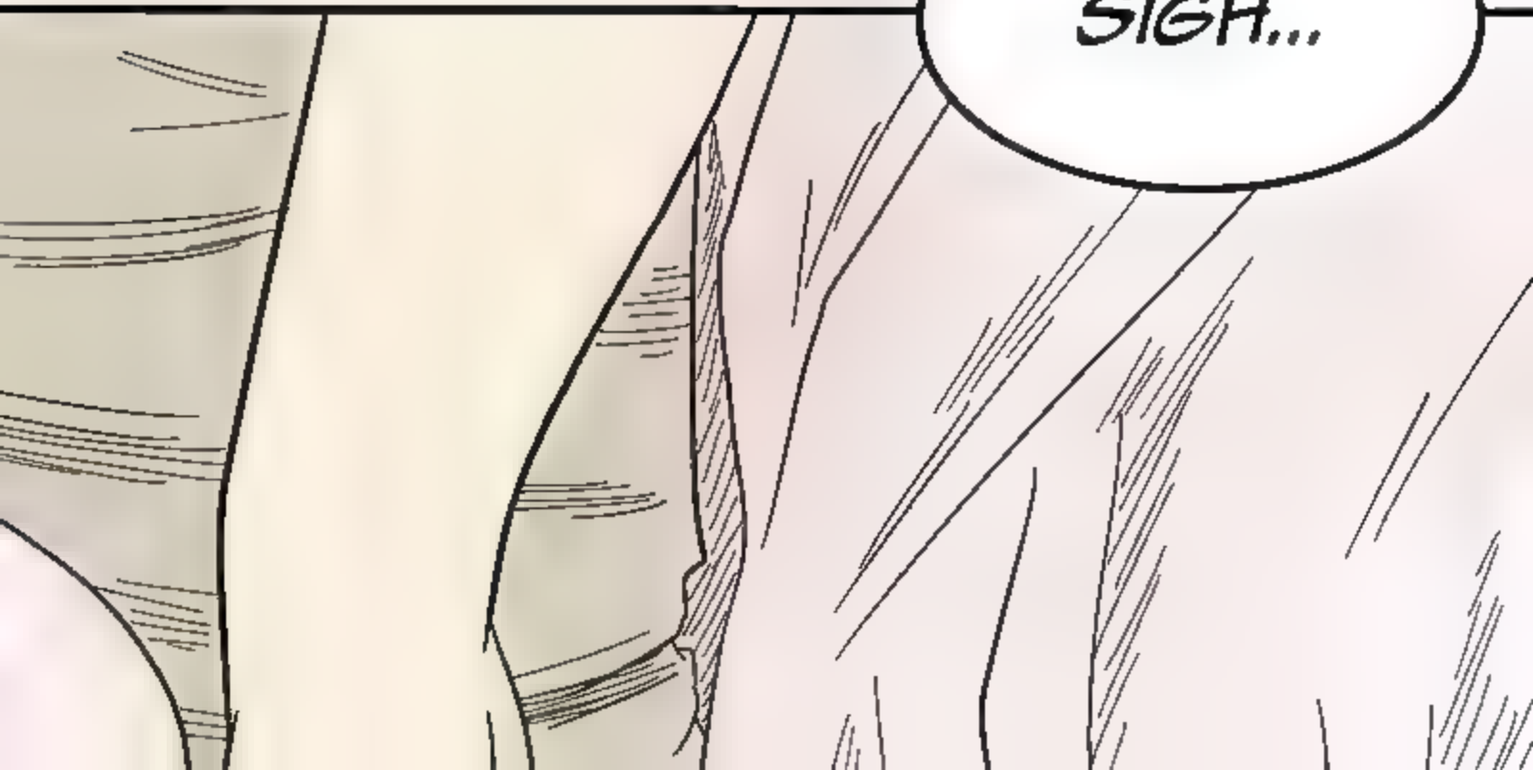
I DON'T THINK YOU ACTUALLY KNOW WHAT A FLAMETHROWER *IS*, FELIX...

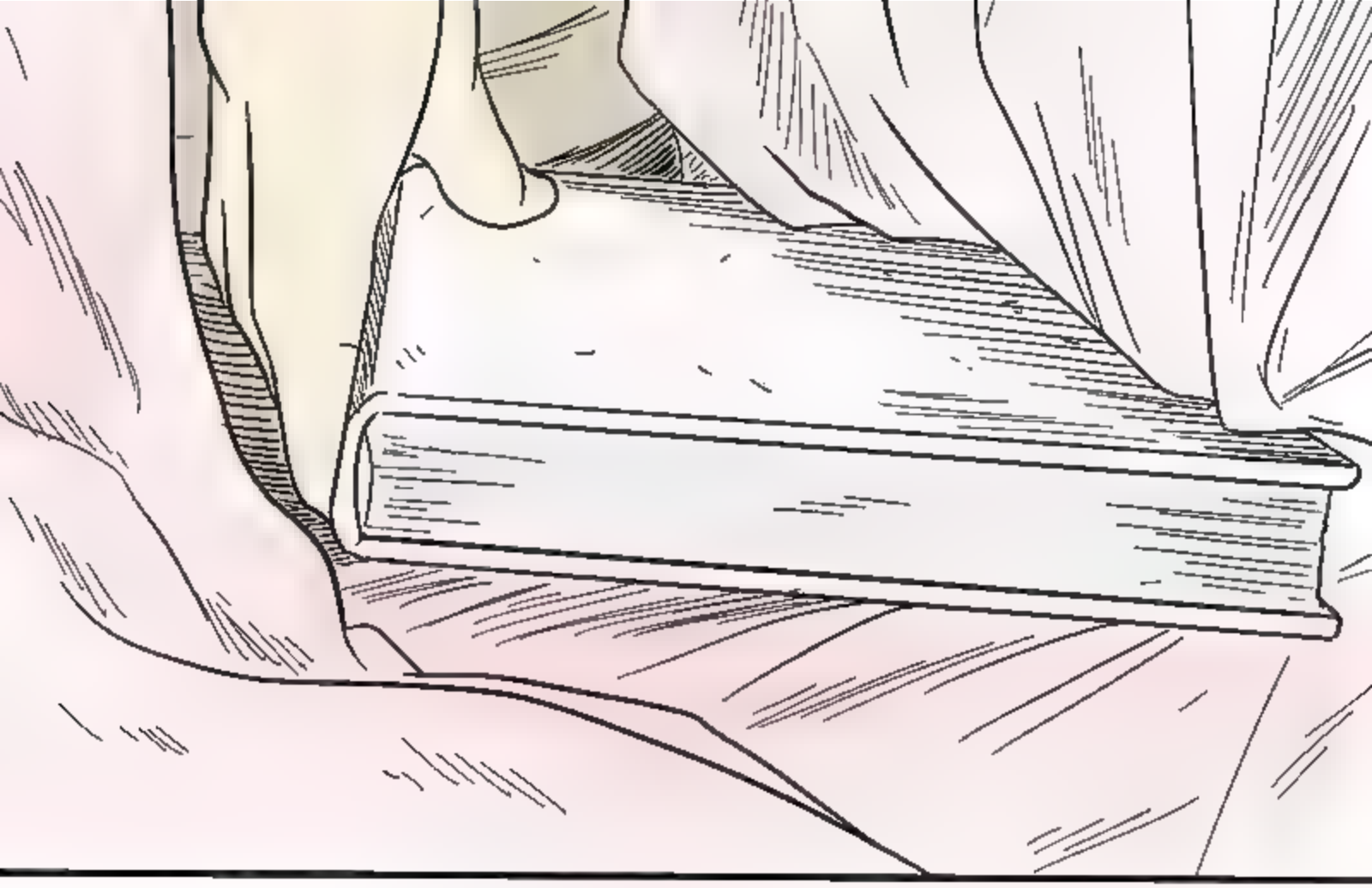

SLAM

I KNOW IT'S NOT GONNA BUILD ITSELF!

NOT WITH THAT ATTITUDE.

SIGH...





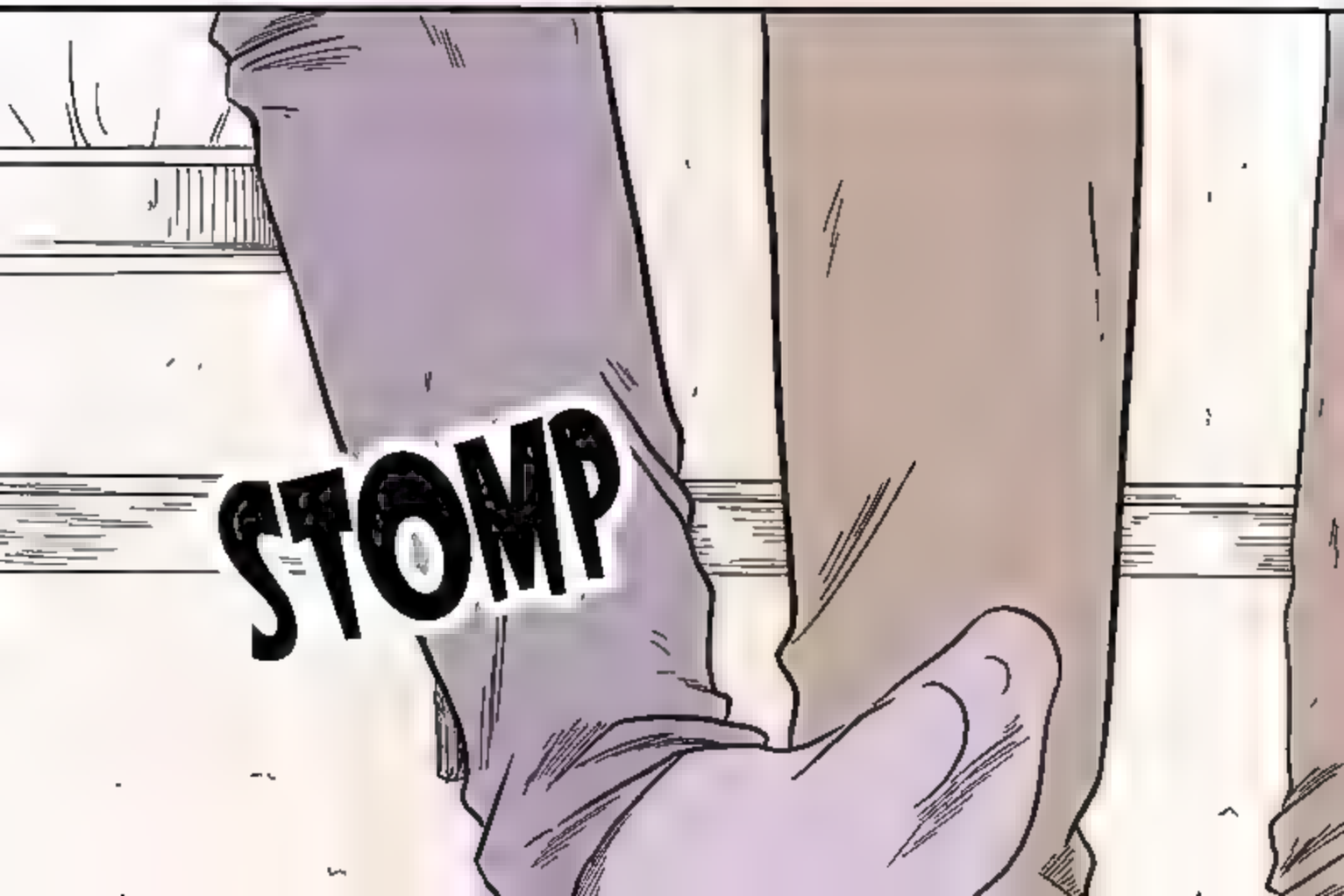
WHATCHA GOT THERE, J?

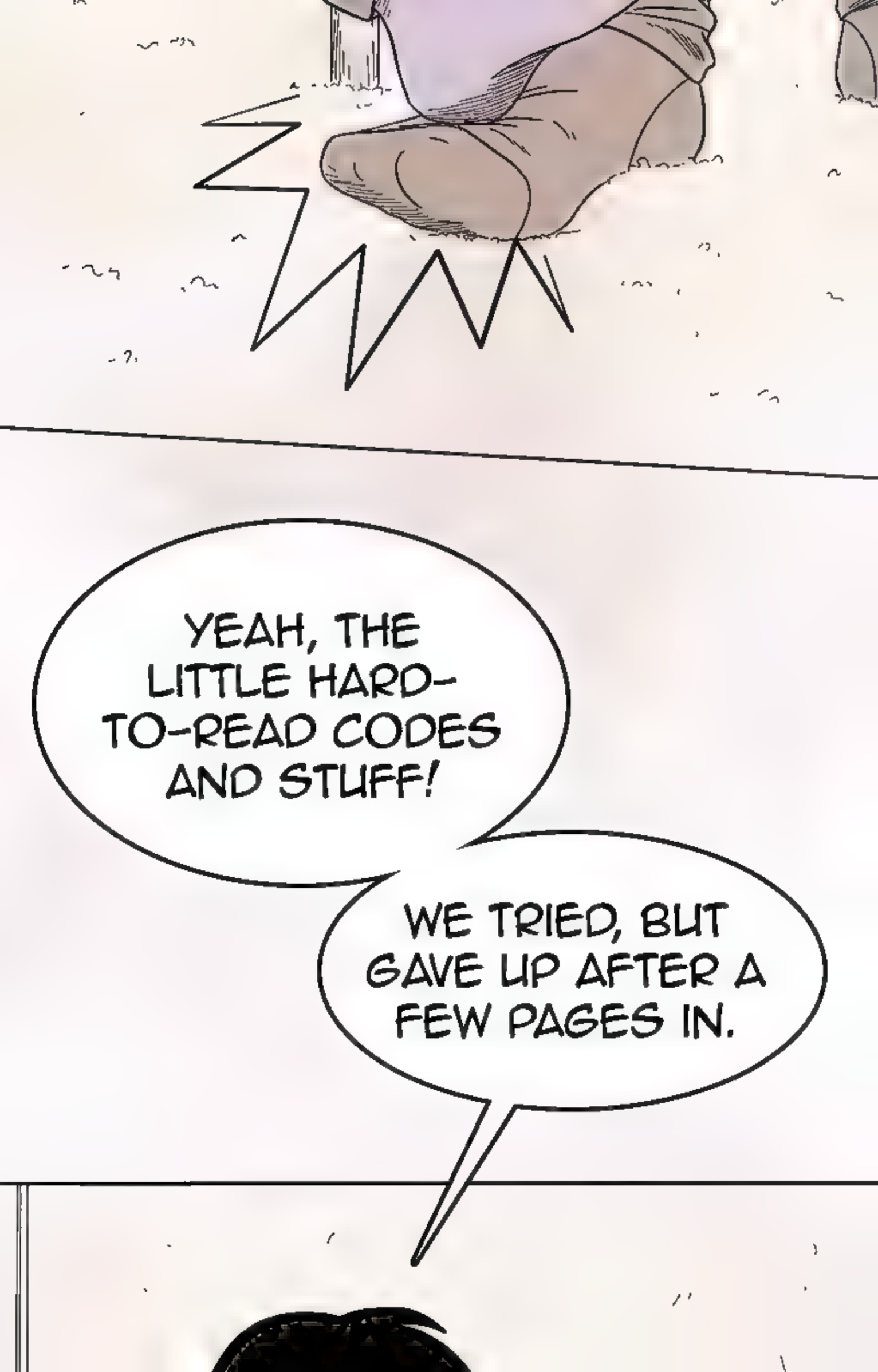
O-OH, UH, NOTHING.

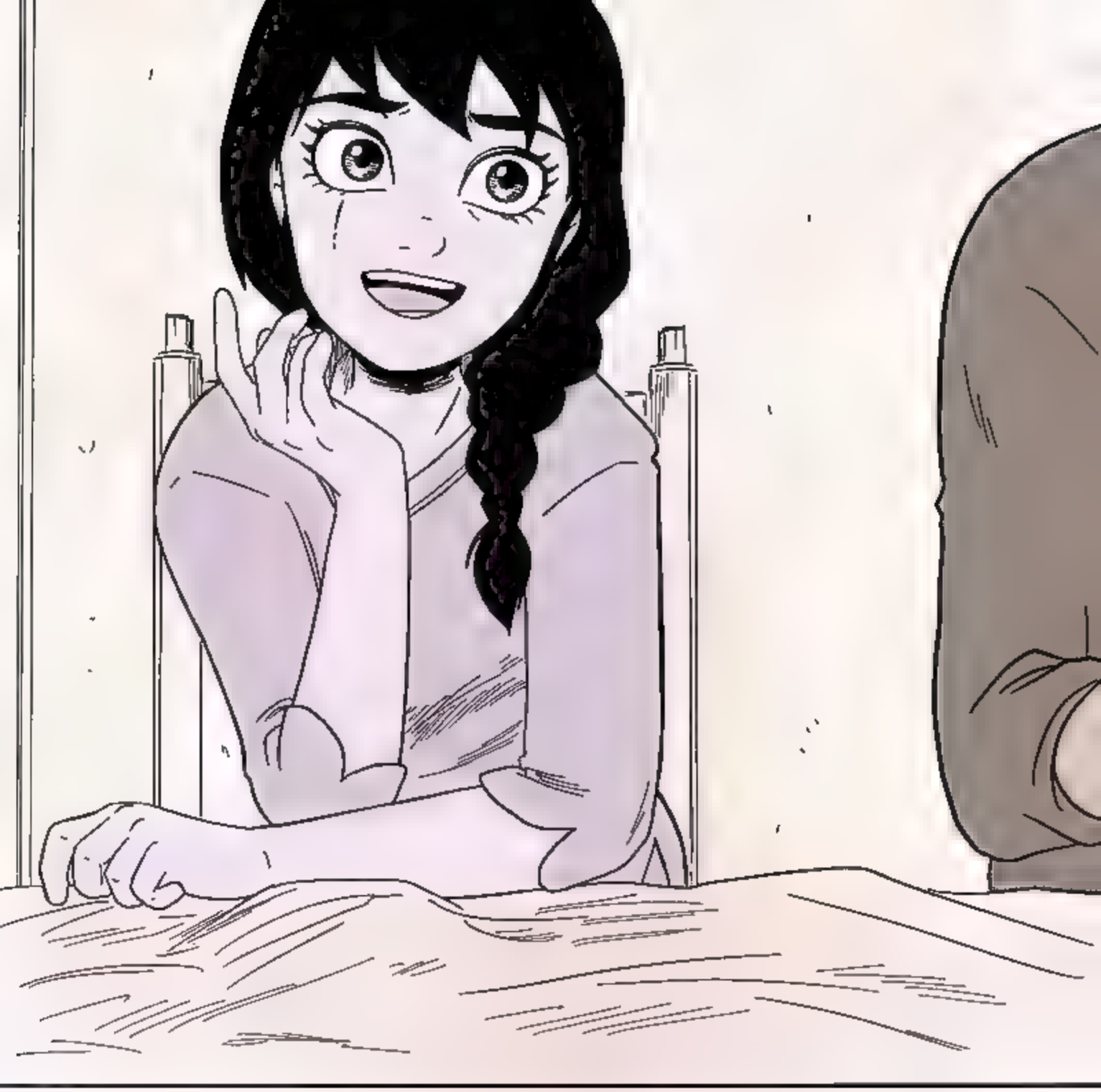
HA!

IS THAT THE BOOK WITH ALL THE LITTLE HEART-

OWWW!



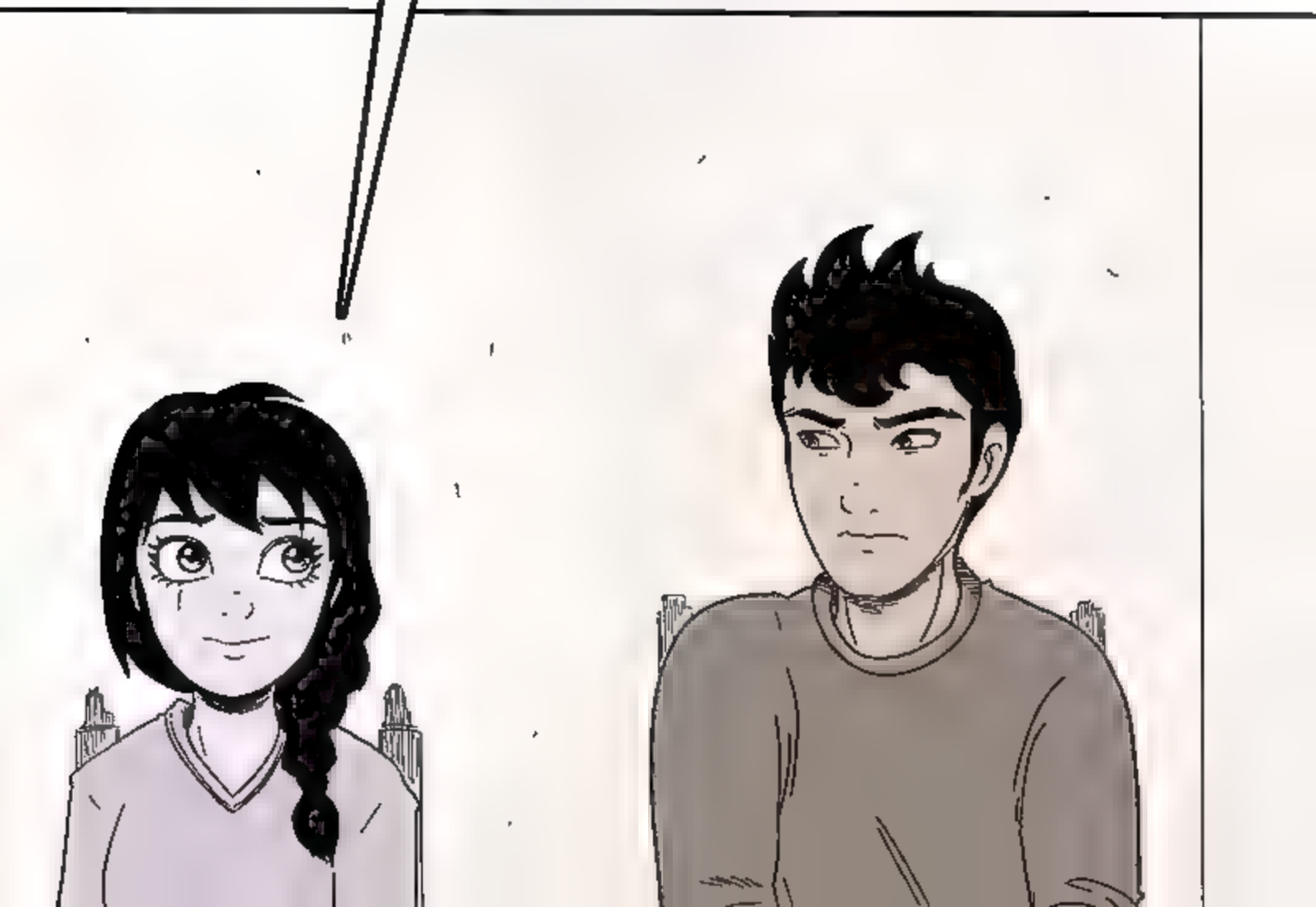

YEAH, THE LITTLE HARD-TO-READ CODES AND STUFF!
WE TRIED, BUT GAVE UP AFTER A FEW PAGES IN.



OH, UM, YEAH?

I-IT'S JUST LIKE, A PERSONAL JOURNAL. NOT IMPORTANT.
HEH.

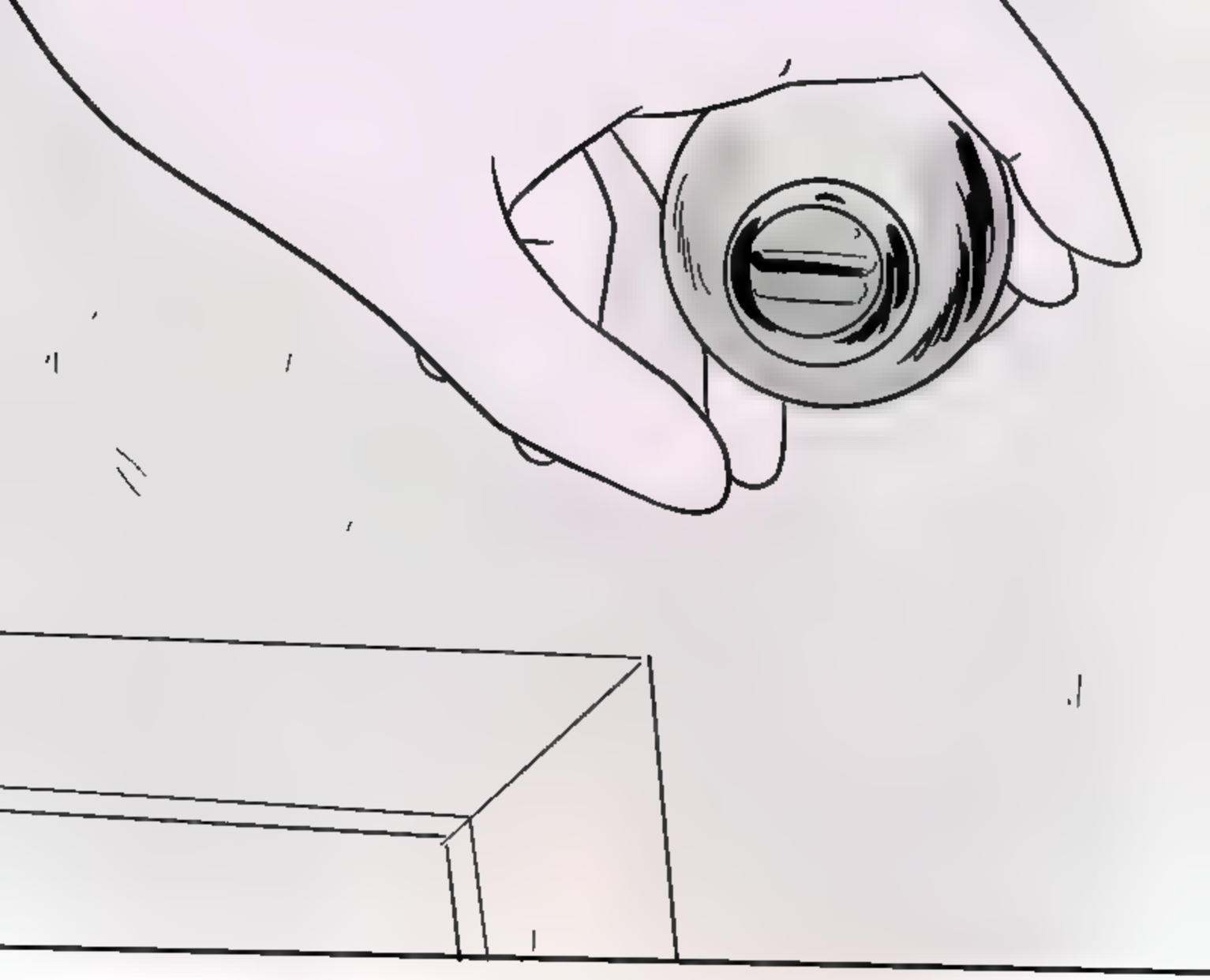
COOL, COOL.



ANYWAY, WE SHOULD LET YOU GET SOME SLEEP.

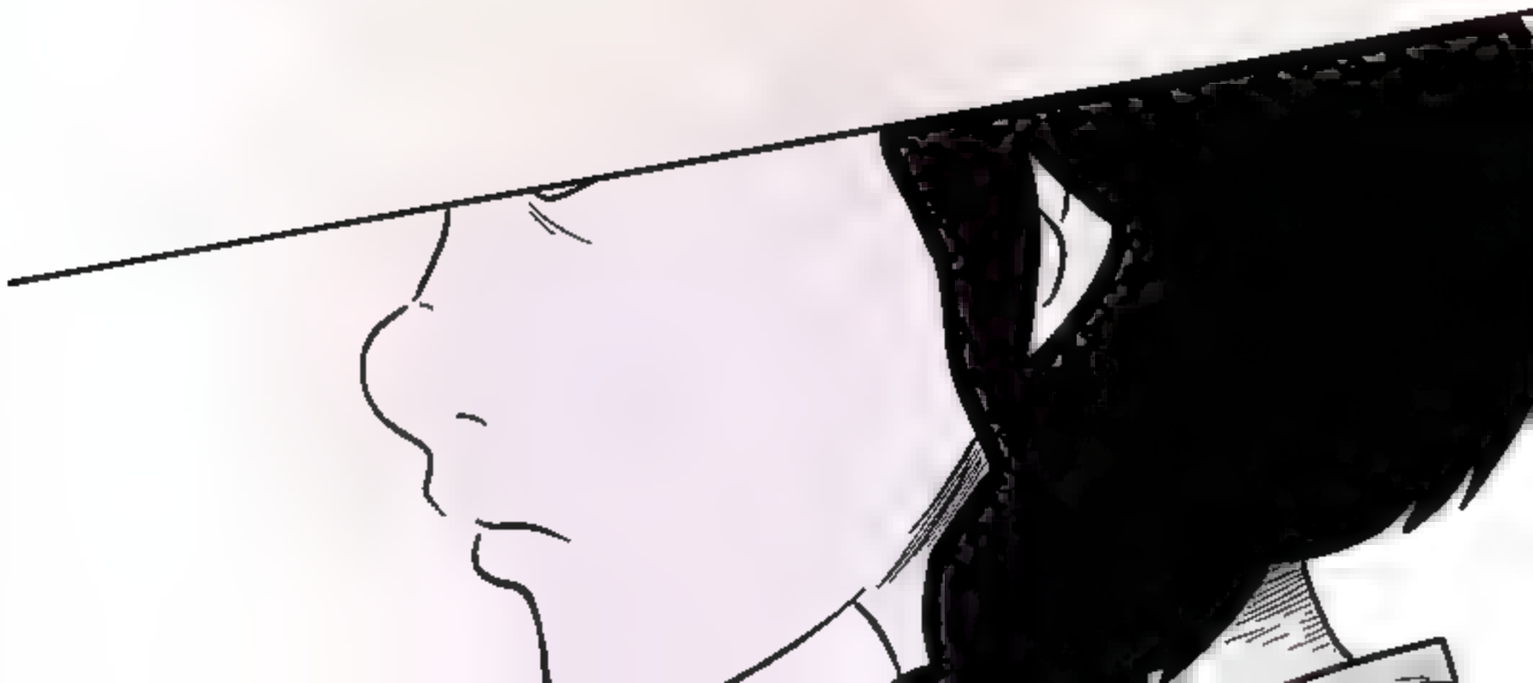
DON'T STAY UP GOING THROUGH THOSE PAPERS, OKAY?
GET ACTUAL REST.
RIGHT, RIGHT.

WE'LL BE JUST DOWN THE HALL IF YOU NEED US.



W-WAIT! UM...

FRANKIE, UH...



HANG ON A SECOND...

YEAH?

UMM...

I WANTED TO TELL YOU THAT...

UM...

WHAT...

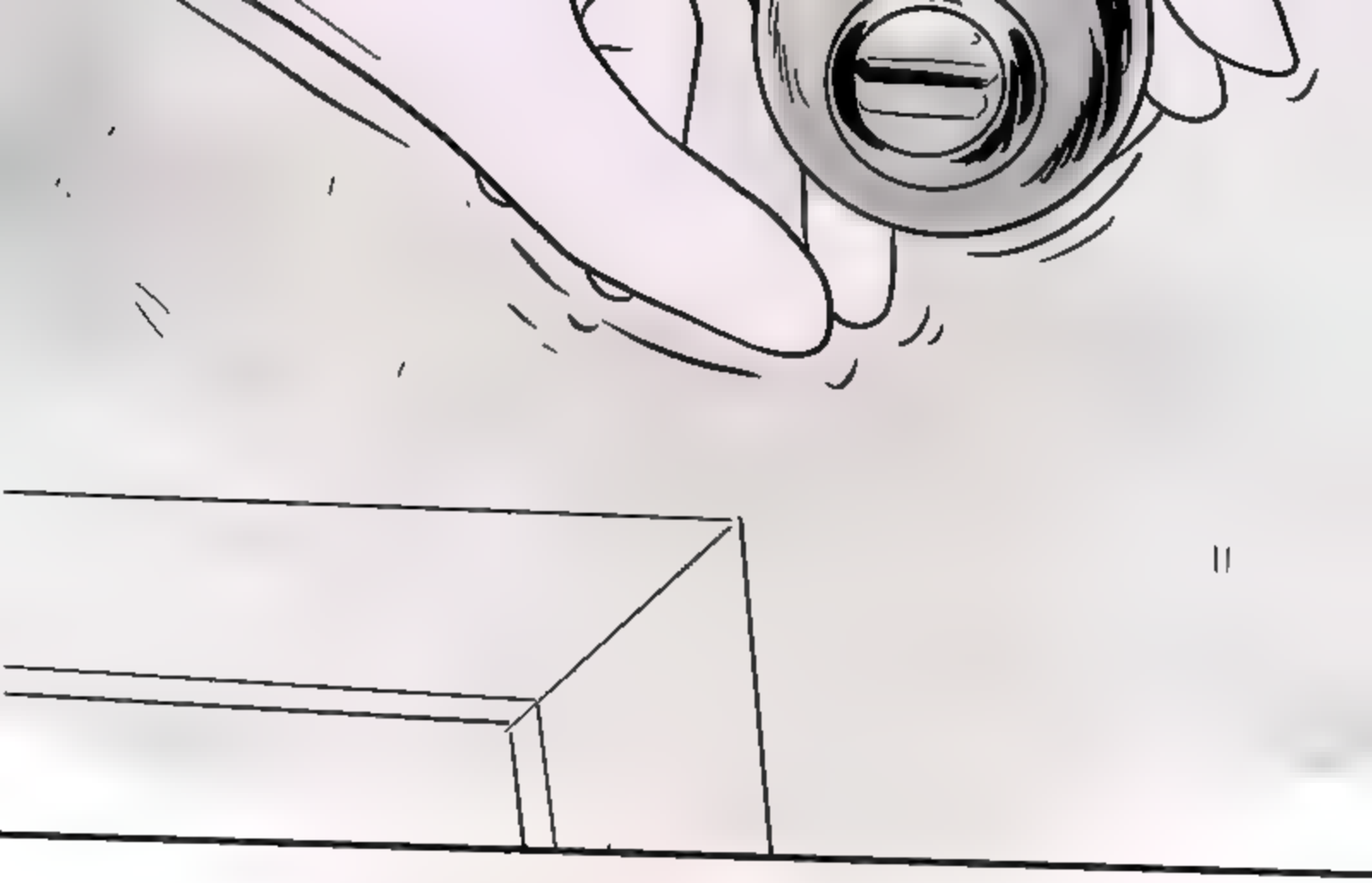
WHAT HAPPENED AT THE BRIDGE...

IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT.

I KNOW YOU DON'T REMEMBER IT THE WAY I DO, BUT...

THERE JUST WASN'T ANY WAY YOU COULD HAVE STOPPED IT.

Y-YOU NEED TO TRUST ME ON THAT, OKAY?

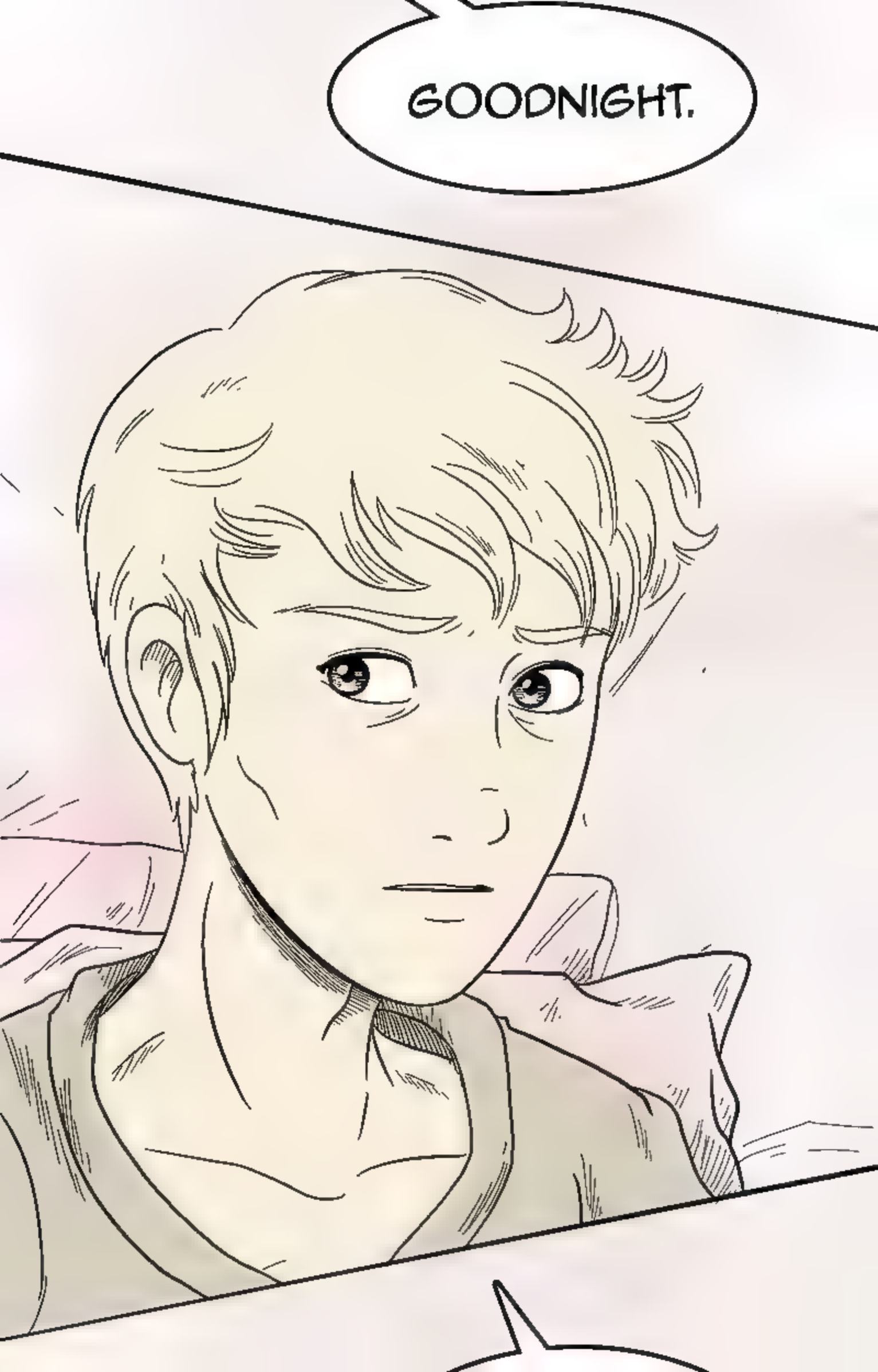


YOU BELIEVE ME, DON'T YOU?

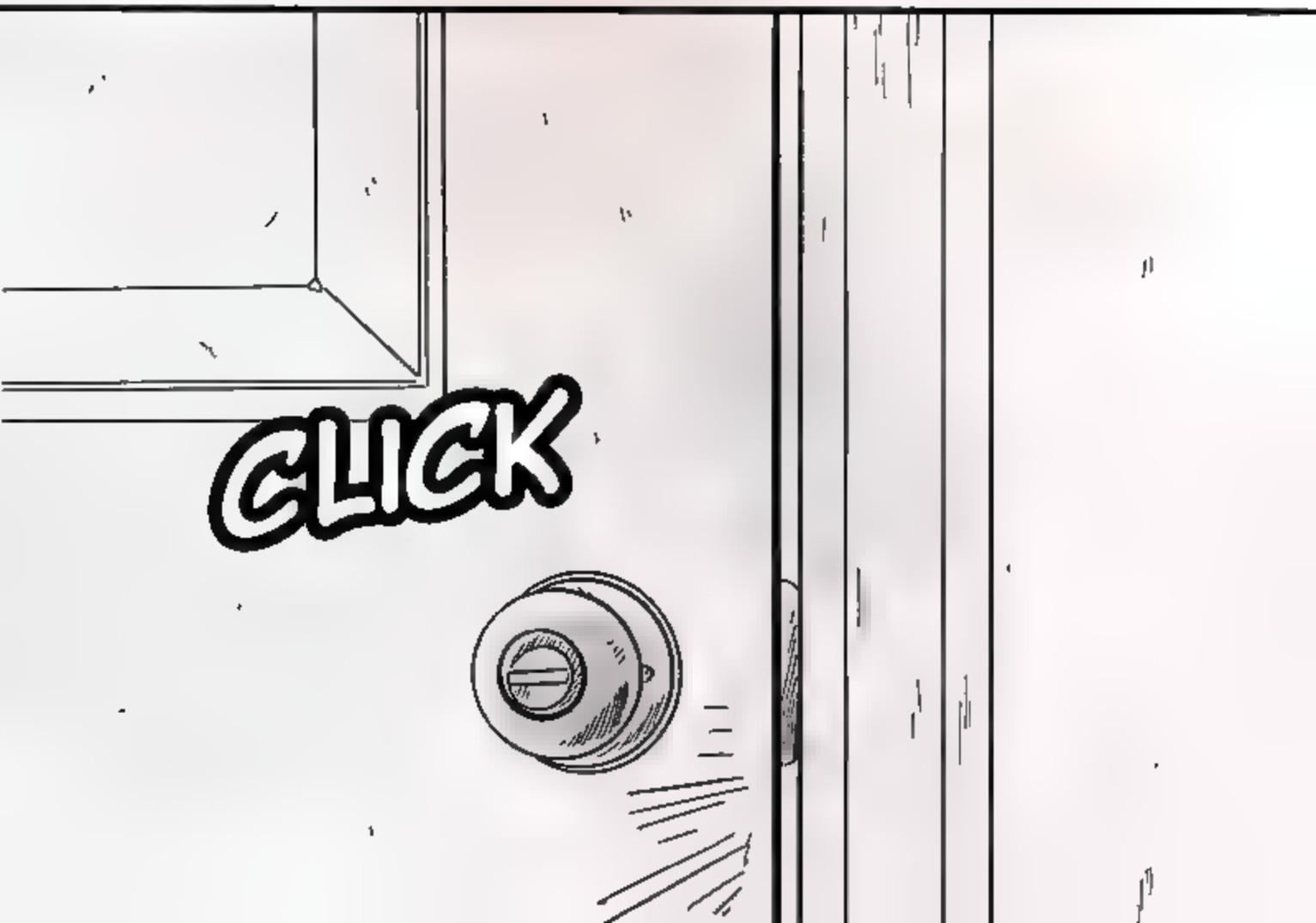
WELL YEAH.

OF COURSE.

DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.


GOODNIGHT.

YEAH...
GOODNIGHT.



YEAH.

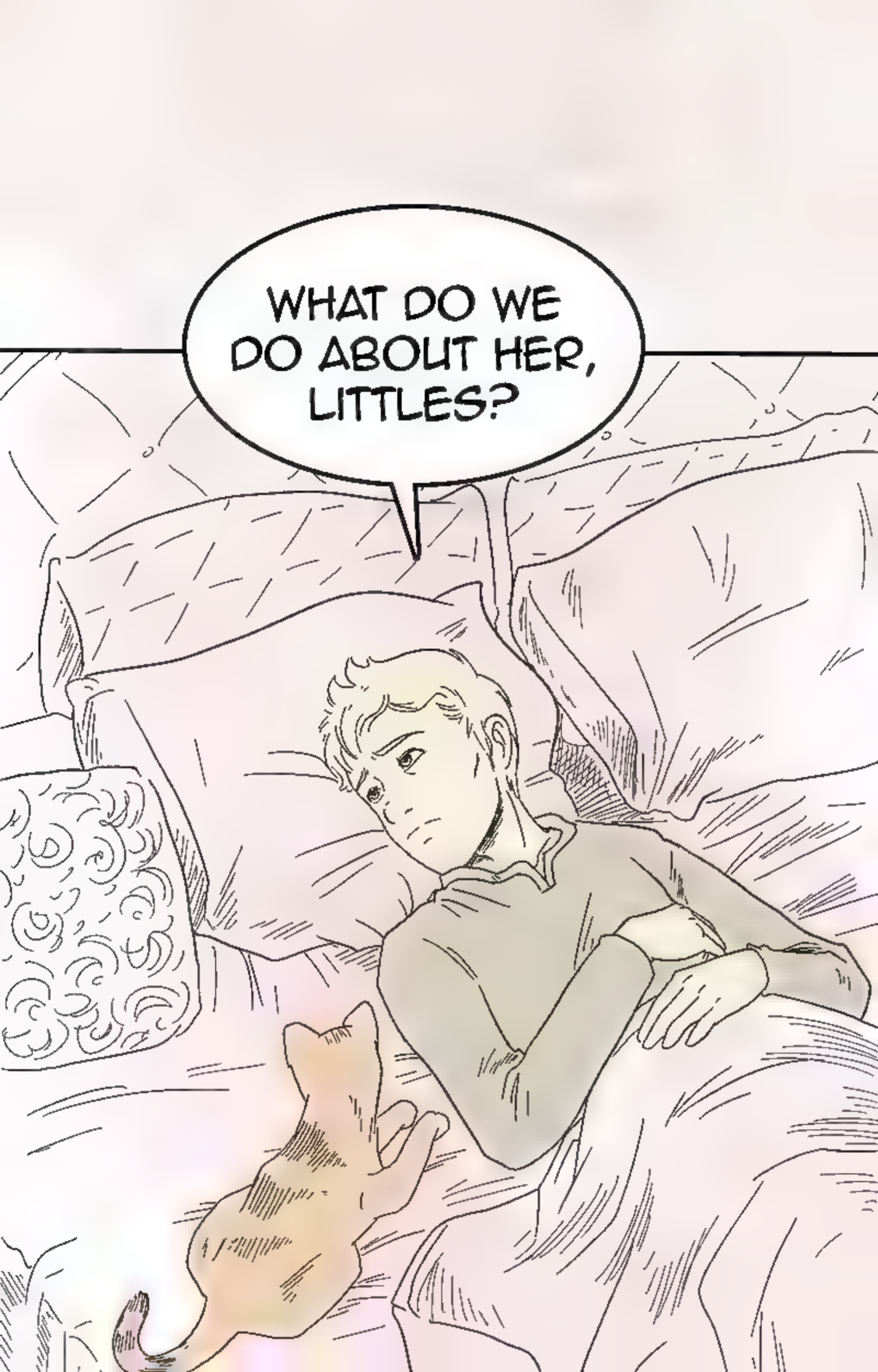
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.

MEOWWW
AH, THOUGHT

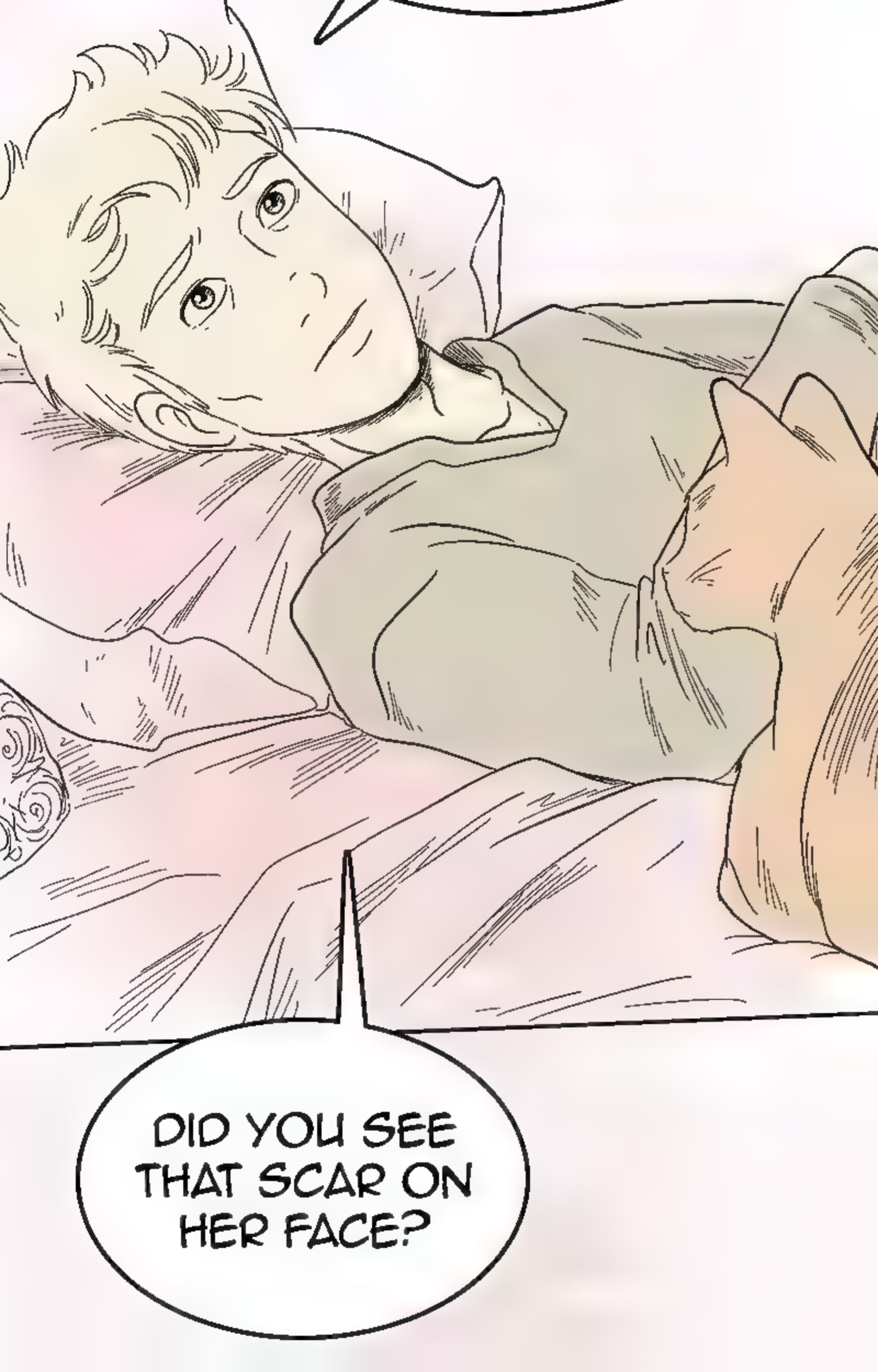
YOU WERE ASLEEP ALREADY.

OKAY, C'MERE YOU LITTLE MEWER.

SIGH...


WHAT DO WE DO ABOUT HER, LITTLES?

I KNOW I SHOULD HAVE SAID MORE.
BUT I CAN'T TELL HER THE TRUTH. SHE'S BEEN THROUGH SO MUCH.

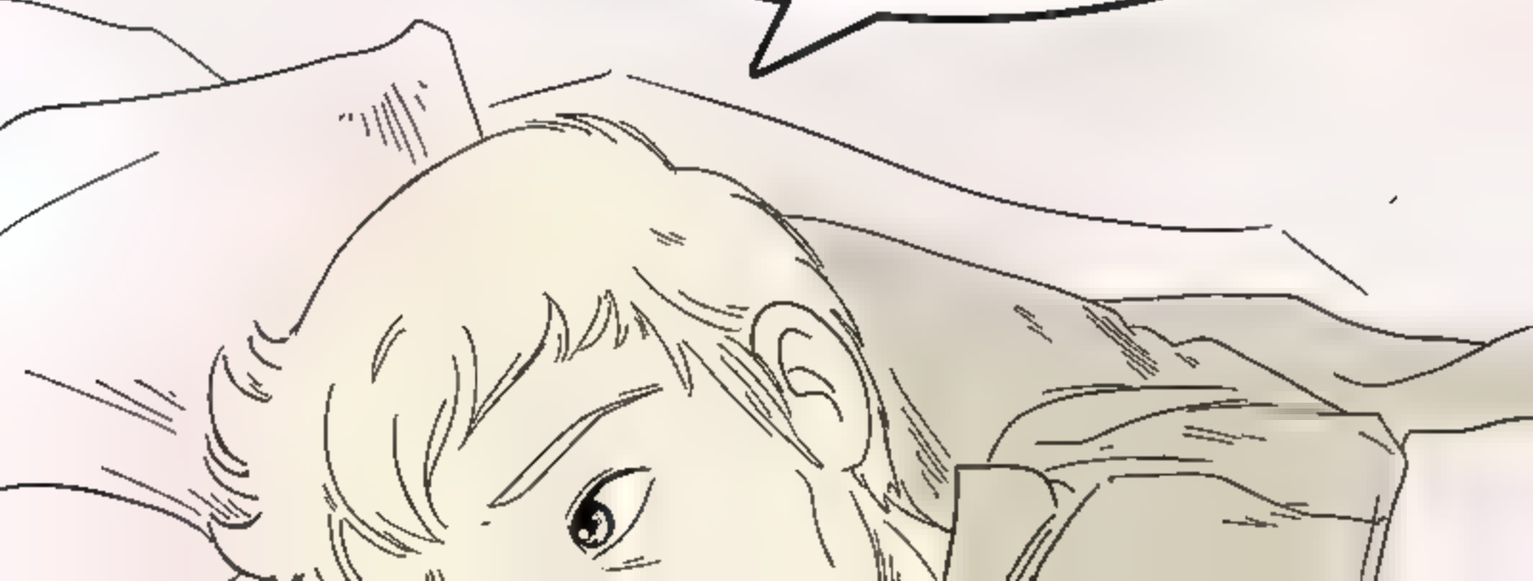

DID YOU SEE THAT SCAR ON HER FACE?

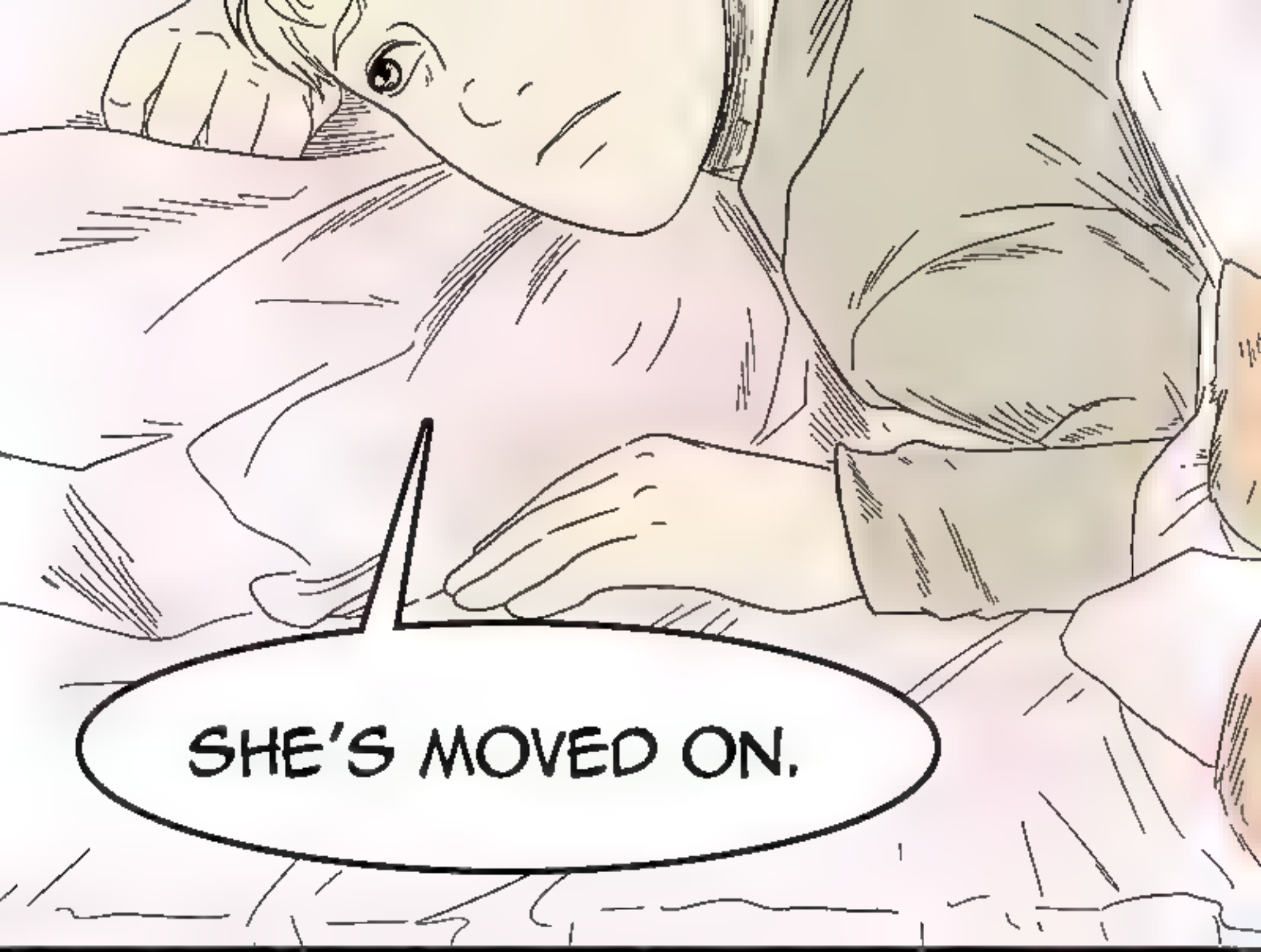
I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT WILL DO TO HER MIND...HAVING ALL THE RESETS MENTIONED.

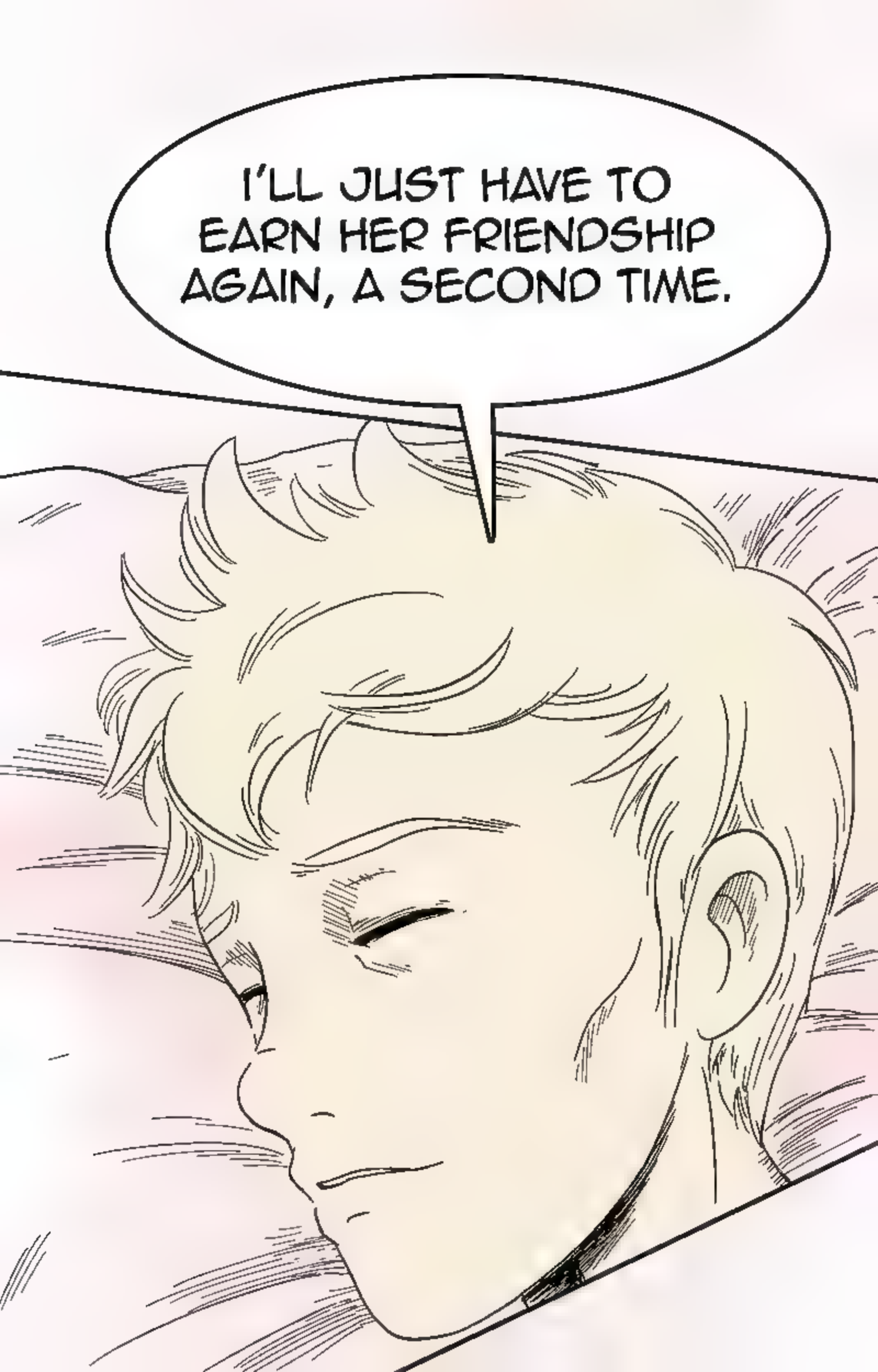
I GET THE FEELING SHE'S BEEN THROUGH MORE OF THEM THAN ANYONE.
AND I'M SCARED FOR HER.

BESIDES, YOU CAN'T SAY TO SOMEONE, "WE USED TO BE FRIENDS," AND NOT HAVE THEM FEEL SORTA...GUILTED INTO IT.

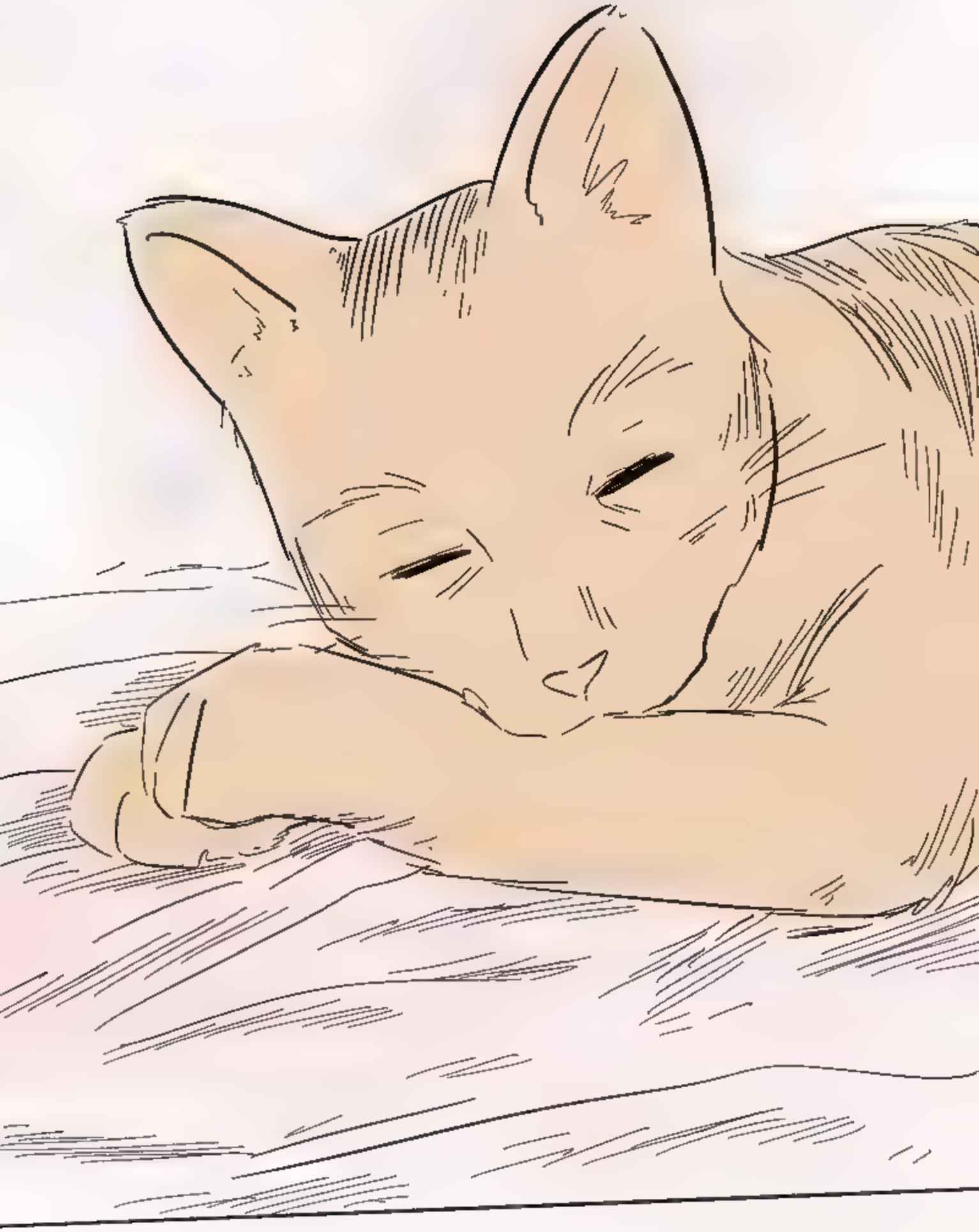
AND SHE AND FELIX...SEEM LIKE A GOOD TEAM.




SHE'S MOVED ON.


I'LL JUST HAVE TO EARN HER FRIENDSHIP AGAIN, A SECOND TIME.

THE FACT THAT EVERYONE IS OKAY, THAT'S THE MOST IMPORTANT THING.



'NIGHT.